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THE REALITY OF MUSIC

By

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To
TWO GENEROUS FRIENDS
URSULA GREVILLE
AND
KENNETH CURWEN
IN TOKEN OF THE FREEDOM
OF THE WORD PRESERVED
BY THEM IN "THE SACKBUT."

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	vii

PART I

REALITY IN PRIMITIVE MUSIC .	I
MUSIC AND RELIGION	6
LULLABIES	12
WORK AND SONG	13
LOVE-SONGS	16
FIGHTING SONGS	21
SONGS OF DEATH	24
SONGS OF SECULAR CEREMONY AND AMUSEMENT . .	30

PART II

REALITY IN FOLK-MUSIC .	35
RELIGIOUS SONGS	36
LULLABIES	42
WORKING SONGS AND SONGS OF WORK	47
SONGS OF LOVE	59
FIGHTING SONGS	64
SONGS OF DEATH	68
FOLK-SONG AND INDUSTRIALISM	76

PART III

PAGE

THE REALITY OF MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION 87

RELIGIOUS MUSIC: THE MASS 99

MUSIC OF MOTHER-LOVE 132

MUSIC AND LABOUR 144

MUSIC AND SEX 180

MUSIC AND WAR 193

MUSIC AND DEATH 210

PART IV

MUSIC MATHEMATICS & MYSTERY 223

INDEX 245

FOREWORD

THIS book is not addressed to full-fledged musicians. They know of the facts it contains; and most of them will, I think, assent to the ideas I have derived from the assembling of those facts. It is to the ordinary music-loving public, and to students, that I wish chiefly to appeal.

Music has to-day a larger audience than ever it had; but that audience has a less certain sense of what music really is than when, in earlier times, fewer people were conscious of a less developed art. Moreover, existing conditions of music are at once extensive and debauching.

Broadly speaking, there are now three kinds of music: light music, good and bad; music which has passed the test of time, and contains elements of depth as well as lightness; and antimusic, noises carefully or carelessly based on the inversion of natural musical law.

The light music serves its purpose: the little good of it gives mental refreshment, the much bad of it makes a commercial return to its tolerated houses.

The antimusic provides a mask of brutality for timid minds, and a mask of novelty for dull ones. So far as the general public is concerned, the antimusic is a cause of nothing but bewilderment.

The time-proven music serves a part of its original function; but only a part, because those who make it and hear it are seldom able to connect it with the real life in which it had its origin. The music is not only a lovely thing in itself; it is also an emotional record of real life.

But the best music, as well as the worst and the anti-

music, serves now to debauch listeners' minds: partly because much of it has become a meaningless dream; partly because it can be heard at any time, at all times, without physical effort, and with no adequate mental effort. The new public of the radio, especially, has little understanding of the fact that to listen to music is itself an art. So-called study in musical appreciation merely diverts the mind from the life of music to its history and anatomy.

What is worse, we musicians incline to grow hardened, as if from a disillusion. We are, in fact, losing grip of our art, and of a rightful relation to those who have a right to our service. The bards of Druidical Britain and the minstrels of the Middle Ages understood something of the nature and importance of their activity, and their own consequent relation to their fellow-folk. We have certainly lost a sense of that relationship, and we seem less and less inclined to believe in the reality and importance of our work.

This book is to emphasize once again that reality, and to recall wherein that reality has consisted.

But what is reality? I know what I mean by the word; but as I have to convey that meaning to others, and as I am no man of letters, I look to the authorities to help me in the matter of definition.

The Oxford Dictionary gives several paragraphs to the word, and several meanings, but the only *thing* I can lay hold of is the Latin root: that is the very thought I want to convey. But I am necessarily abashed to discover that Reality also stands for complicated ideas which I am unable to grasp. It is a word which has been seized by philosophers for their metatheological art.

From Bertrand Russell's essay on *The Scientific Method in Philosophy*, I extract the following:

Let us begin with the word "real." There certainly are objects of perception, and therefore, if the question whether

those objects are real is to be a substantial question, there must be in the world two sorts of objects, namely the real and the unreal.

That I cannot understand. That the idea of reality has no meaning unless the idea of unreality also exists to trouble us can be admitted; but why the *things* of the earth cannot exist for a philosopher, unless he must also admit the existence of objects which are no-things, is too puzzling for my unphilosophic mind, unless the idea is to knock the stuffing out of the word 'real.'

Lenin, in his treatise on *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, said 'the term "realism" has been usurped by positivists and other muddleheads who vacillate between materialism and idealism.' While old Trader Horn said 'Do I believe in realism? It's a thing I've never had anything to do with, Ma'am. Reality's good enough for me. In plain words, facts. And that's what I've built on in this book.'

Finally I asked my nearest friend 'What is reality?' and the answer came quick, 'Things as they are.' The people of action have it clear every time.

Facts. Things as they are. That was what I also wanted to build on in my book. Music as it is in the physical make of it; in the physical conditions which evoke it; in the physical reactions it calls forth from those who make and hear it.

As I have said, a part of the evils which affect music to-day is due to the false idea that the art is independent of the world of things. (Perhaps the falsity resulting is one of Bertrand Russell's things which are no-things?) My object in this book is to show the contrary, its dependence, as exemplified by the instinctive music-making of simple people and the more conscious art of the great masters.

Though to experienced musicians who still love their art this book has nothing to offer, to students and to the public—especially to the new and pathetically helpless public of the wireless—it will, I hope, show something

of the working of those natural laws which governed the evolution of music, and still condition its vitality.

Let students and music-lovers consider certain *facts* relating to the music of savages and peasants, of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner, and then make decisions in matters of taste for themselves. It is for the non-professionals to assert their own rights to musical satisfaction, irrespective of professional and commercial interests and ideas, including, of course, the ideas expressed in the following pages.

My acknowledgements are due to the following:—To representatives of the late Miss Natalie Curtis for permission to quote verses and text from *The Indians' Book*¹; to Mr J. A. Fuller-Maitland and Messrs Cramer & Company for permission to quote verses from *English County Songs*, collected and edited by Lucy E. Broadwood and J. A. Fuller-Maitland; to Dr W. G. Whittaker and Messrs Curwen & Sons for permission to quote verses from *North Country Songs, Ballads, and Pipe-Tunes*; and to Mrs Hood (Patuffa Kennedy-Fraser), and Messrs Boosey and Hawkes for permission to quote verses and descriptions from *The Songs of the Hebrides*. From all the above I have gathered my evidence freely, besides freely citing some of the evidence assembled by Mr W. D. Hamblin in his book on *Tribal Dancing and Social Development*. I am none the less grateful to him and to other authorities whose works I have used to a lesser extent, and from whom I have sought no formal permission.

R. B.

¹ *The Indians' Book* by Natalie Curtis. Harper, 1907.

THE REALITY OF MUSIC

PART I

REALITY IN PRIMITIVE MUSIC

FOR primitive man life has a religious background, and music is the language of that background.

Some writers on primitive man have referred to his religion as magic. Inasmuch as the thing to which they have referred is concerned with exactly the same problems as the religions of civilized peoples—behaviour on earth, and connection with a spiritual world—it is not easy to understand why the spiritual tendencies of primitive man should be deglossed. Why give to that religion a name which seems to derogate from the importance of the thing itself? The word is inadequate in any case, as magic pertains only to a part of the subject. The magical or spiritual element in primitive man's religion may be considerable; it is none the less certain that his chief religious object has been to ensure satisfactory relations with his fellows, and, so far as he can ascertain or imagine, a proper kind of contact with the world of spirits—a world he believes in and fears, and to some extent actually feels, though he sees its results only in such things as growing grain, blasted tree, and cold corpse.

Primitive religion touches every activity from the cradle to the coffin. Religious rites give expression and sanction to what is felt in almost every direction; and in the act of expression bring about a closer contact with the world of spirits. Of that religious expression music is an almost inevitable agent.

Music haunts primitive man from the time of his birth to the time when he himself joins the spirits of his fathers. Between those moments music gives expression to the emotions and ideas of his infancy, childhood, and puberty; music accompanies initiation into manhood and womanhood; music is used to invoke the spiritual powers which cause the seed to germinate and the harvest to be garnered; music places man in closer contact with the animal world upon which much of his food depends; the help of music is sought that his diseases may be cured and his evil spirits cast out; beneficent spirits are approached by him in musical prayer and praise; he begins to learn the value of music as an aid to concerted labour; he stimulates his sexual passions to the sound of music, and sometimes there emerges from his lips a tender love-song; he holds great musical ceremonies in honour of his guests; he feasts them to music, and amuses them afterwards with song and dance; he gives benefit performances of music for needy members of his tribe; he records the small as well as the great happenings of his day by means of improvised song; he kindles his warlike moods with dances, and celebrates vengeance and victory in derisive choruses; and finally he is ushered away from earth to the world of ghosts by means of death-songs and funeral dances.

Very little of this music makes an æsthetic effect upon civilized people. Some of it would not be recognized by them for music in their sense of the word. A good deal of it evolved from imitations of the cries of animals, and still bears witness to its origin. There is little difference between the howl of a dog, the cry of the gibbon referred to by Darwin in *The Descent of Man*, and the song of the Australian aborigines quoted by Parry in *The Art of Music*. Upon that same descending vocal sound is based a great part of the song-tunes referred to in this chapter. In that sound we have

the beginnings of musical art—an art which was first developed in vital association with primitive religion.

The vocal activity eventually glorified by the genius of Bach and Wagner, was regarded by primitive peoples as a more continuously needful and spiritual expression than the developed art is by ourselves. This happened, of course, because music offered a kind of expression which apparently had nothing to do with the normal expressions of physical existence.

The branching of vocal sound into speech and song occurred early in the evolution of man. Song is at once unnecessary and mysteriously powerful in its effect. It has been therefore the more appropriately used by primitive man in connection with his religious ideas—and that not only when his religion has been concerned with the concrete needs and ailments of his physical being, but also, and more persuasively, in connection with his apprehensions of a spiritual world.

Dance preceded song in point of time as a means of religious expression. There are savage dances without music, and savage songs without dancing; but the musicless dances are more primitive in type than those with musical accompaniment,¹ whereas the undanced songs, as we shall presently see, indicate a higher mentality.

However, both dance and song are associated at a comparatively early period in the communal life of primitive peoples, and in this chapter they will be treated as expressions of a similar impulse. Later on it will be interesting to notice what kinds of mentality are indicated by the two methods of expression—separately, and in association.

D. H. Lawrence, in his essay on Indians and Entertainment² showed that he was particularly susceptible to certain aspects of primitive music. The singing of the Mexican Indians reminded him of dogs howling

¹ Hambly, *Tribal Dancing and Social Development*, pp. 116-7.

² *Mornings in Mexico*, by D. H. Lawrence, p. 107.

to a drumming accompaniment. In some of their dances he found no drama, no conscious intention. He perceived no realistic basis in the Indian round dances, but he was keenly aware of their hypnotic monotony. Apparently they meant nothing at all though the whole body of men present took part in them. None stood apart or looked on; and even when separate members of the group ceased to sing from time to time, they would still continue the monotonous movement.

What, then, the purpose of it all?

Lawrence decided that such dances were a source of re-creation in the finest sense of the word. He thought that the primitive man obtained from communal dances the sort of re-invigoration we get from sleep. It was, he declared, 'the dark blood falling back from the mind . . . back to the great central source where there is rest and unspeakable renewal.'

Such examples of primitive song as we find in books and essays dealing with the subject are generally drawn from various sources without regard to their relative practical importance in the lives of the singers. Though such examples give us interesting ideas of primitive musical mentality, we are left uncertain as to how generally representative the examples may be, what stage of development they indicate, and to what extent the songs are associated with the lives of those who made them.

To avoid at any rate a part of that uncertainty I shall examine here the most complete collection of primitive songs known to me—the hundred-and-forty-seven songs of the North American Indians contained in *The Indians' Book*, recorded and edited by Natalie Curtis, and published in New York in 1907, the year that saw the publication of the book in which Cecil Sharp gave his conclusions regarding the nature of English folk-song.

The North American Indian songs are by no means the lowest kind of music. Some of them may even be degenerate versions of a lost Aztec or Mayan art. But such a collection gives a good idea of a comparatively primitive music in the round. It is not a haphazard collection of songs picked up here and there, but a complete music, expressing nearly all the musically expressible feelings and ideas of men and women in a childlike state of mental growth, living a tribal life, and depending chiefly on hunting for a livelihood. Such expressions as seem to be missing may, perhaps, be those which Indians who had already been in contact with white civilization preferred not to give to a white woman.

We can to some extent check our ideas of what such a music implies by details of song gathered from other sources.

Of the importance of music in Indian life Miss Curtis writes in her preface:

To the Indian, song is a spirit that consecrates the acts of life. Not all songs are religious, but there is scarcely a task, light or grave, scarcely an event great or small, but has its fitting song. In the Hebrew Genesis the creating word is *spoken*. And God said, Let there be light! In nearly every Indian myth the Creator *sings* things into life.

Let the Indians themselves tell of the two classes of song recognized by them. The following is taken from statements by White-Bone, Iron-Bird, and Standing-Bear of the Dakotas, the great and warlike Sioux tribe:

Two are the kinds of songs: songs made by man, and songs that come in dreams or in visions through the spirits from Wakan Tanka. Of the first kind there are songs made by the mind of man to please the ear. Then there are songs to express feelings and to rouse feelings—songs to stir men to brave deeds, to give strength in battle, and songs to make strong the heart to meet danger, grief, and death. War-songs, victory-songs, songs sung in Omaha dances—all these are of the first kind. So also are the songs of the different societies, such as the White Horse Society, the Fox Society, and many others. Love-songs, gaming-

songs, more kinds of song than can be mentioned are made by man for his feeling, and his pleasure. All such songs may be sung by anyone.

Songs of the second kind come from Wakan Tanka, and are wakan—holy, apart. No man has the right to sing such a song save him to whom the song came in dream or in vision. But this man may teach the song to others and give to them the right to sing it. All songs that are holy, that belong to sacred rites and ceremonies, that have power to work wonders, that go with healing, are of this kind.

(*The Indians' Book*, pp. 60-1.)

Wakan Tanka means, not God, but the Great Mystery.

Now it is not pretended that all the songs classified below as religious songs had their origin in dream, or the songs under other headings are all, from the Indian view-point, secular songs. The majority of Indian songs of *all* kinds seem to have had religious implications. The classification which follows in the following pages is one which, I think, will be most generally advantageous in comparing the function of primitive music with the function of music in a more advanced human development.

Religion which looms so large in primitive music and in the music of certain stages of civilization, is a matter of much lesser importance in folk-music and in other stages of civilization; but it has influenced music almost everywhere, and the more easily to understand its varying importance separate consideration is given to it in these pages. The other subdivisions are obvious enough: Mother-love, Sex-love, Labour, War and Death, are subject-matter for music under almost all conditions of human life.

MUSIC AND RELIGION

Because the cure of physical ailments is one of the duties of the Indian men of religion they are generally referred to as Medicine Men. But that, like the

substitution of magic for the more inclusive idea of religion, is to give a wrong impression of the position of those men.

The Holy Men, or Men of Mystery, are the prophets, sooth-sayers, moral leaders, and healers of the tribe. Catlin says 'The Indians do not use the word Medicine, but in each tribe they have a word of their own construction, synonymous with mystery or mystery-men.' (*The Indians' Book*, p. 32.)

Holy Men is the better term, not only because it suggests their priestly function, but also because it enables us to appreciate their parallels in our own earlier European history, when holy also meant hale, and the business of holiness included the art of healing.

Here is the song of the Dakotas, taught to them by one of their holy men:

O ye people! Be ye healed;
Life anew I bring unto ye.
Through the Father over all do I thus.
Life anew I bring unto ye.

In that particular song the melody is entirely devoted to the expression of the words, with the exception of a curious prolongation of the final vowel sound in each phrase, giving the musical effect of a group of accented tied notes. But a large proportion of the religious songs are in part, and sometimes wholly, composed of unintelligible words or meaningless vocables. Some of these are said to be ancient songs in forgotten tongues. Others are partly intelligible, but associated with meaningless refrains. The refrains are probably debased forms of archaic phrases, even as the 'heyderry-down' of English folk-song is said to be the debased form of the Welsh 'hob y deri dando.'

The songs of the Mescal rite, as sung by the Cheyenne Indians, are entirely unintelligible, though a meaning is said to be understood by members of a secret fraternity. The Mescal songs are 'invocations that the truths of the universe may be revealed.'

Mystical songs of that kind are known in other parts of the world. A tribe living in the Nilgiri Hills of Southern India has its holy men who in frenzy deliver themselves of a language not understood by their fellows. They are then believed to be speaking the language of their god. Some of the Malayan peoples have similar songs. They are not generally understood because couched in archaic language; but the songs are said to have a meaning for the singers.¹

In the same connection it may be noted that the dancing-song heard by D. H. Lawrence was of a religious nature and had no words.

A large number of primitive religious rites have been associated with the animal world, the celebrants putting on masks and skins of beasts. This has been explained as a result of the hunter's desire to increase the fertility of the creatures upon which so much of his livelihood depended. There seems little doubt that such desire plays a part; but it goes deeper than that, as the Egyptian gods show, and as Hambly himself found when he was puzzled by the frequent connection between sun-worship and snake-worship among primitive folk.

The Indians' Book throws a certain light upon it:

Everything that has life has spirit as well as fleshly form. All things have nagi soul. Rocks and animals have the power to appear in the form of man, and to speak to man in dream or in vision. It is from Wakan Tanka that they have power and wisdom. . . . When the spirit comes to man in a dream, it may be thus: a song is heard on the air, then a form appears. . . . When he turns to go, he takes in disappearing whatever form may be his own - if he be animal, he will take the form of bear, buffalo, or bird.

Indeed it would seem that in the subconsciousness of primitive man there is some such feeling as many poets have had. For example, Whitman, when he said that

¹ Hambly, book already cited.

animals 'show their relations to me, and I accept them; they bring me tokens of myself.' And D. H. Lawrence who, in his poems on *Buds, Beasts, and Flowers*, emphasized the alienation rather than the kindred nature of man and animals, explained the Mexican attitude in very different terms.

He was describing one of the most elaborate Indian dances. Some of the dancers were hunters. Others assumed the appearance of animals, wore the skins and head-pieces of bear and wolf, horned bull and antlered deer. Little boys were dressed as foxes. All these animal-dancers were led in by Indian girls. Meanwhile the hunter-dancers waited for their part in the play. But Lawrence decided that even in such a dance there was no attempt at dramatic representation. He said that it was 'a soft, subtle, *being* something.'¹

The same writer also gave of sun-and-snake worship an explanation which, if issuing from his intuition rather than his knowledge, is exactly in tune with the view given by the Indians themselves in Miss Curtis's book and quoted above. Lawrence said that during the snake-dances of the Hopis² they sang in a strange quiet voice such as he had never heard among other peoples. He imaged the central fires of the earth as a great dark sun from which the snakes flowed like living lightning. He likened their movements to the quickening of life in corn and in human beings from the same dark source. The dance made him think of the uncreated life-streams flowing from earth's central heat until they reached the roots of corn and the loins of men.²

Freud has treated of the same dark forces. He declares that the barriers separating man from beast 'are not in existence from the outset, but are only gradually built up in the course of development and

¹ *Mornings in Mexico*, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, p. 151.

education. The little child is free from them, he does not perceive any immense gulf between man and beast. The arrogance with which man separates himself from the other animals only dawns in him at a later period.¹

An intimate and rather horrible example, showing how close the relations between beast and human may become by artificial means, including the use of music, is told in the chapter called 'Goat-cry, Girl-cry' from *The Magic Island*, a book sympathetically describing the Voodoo rites as practised in Haiti in our own time. The author, Mr W. B. Seabrook, describes in that chapter his own initiation into the tribe; and rites of tribal initiation, and of initiation into manhood and womanhood, form an important and distinct branch of primitive man's religious and musical ceremonial.

In *The Indians' Book* there are no songs of Initiation, named as such, though the many songs of Dog Society, Fox Society, Wolf Society may perhaps be used at such ceremonies. Confirmation of that suggestion is at least hinted in a Song of the White Horse Society:

Friend, whatever hardships threaten,
If thou call me I'll befriend thee;
All enduring fearlessly I'll befriend thee.

On the other hand, the lack of avowed songs of initiation into manhood and womanhood in that particular collection may have been due to a reticence which collectors of folk-songs have experienced in regard to certain kinds of song. Mr Fox Strangways, in an essay on Folk-Music refers to 'the disinclination of natives to divulge their oldest, and usually most sacred, songs, and of members of a guild to communicate their theories and mysteries. And both the actual song and the musical theory which underlies it need to be studied together.'²

¹ *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, Eng. trans., p. 176.

² From the Introductory Volume to *The Oxford History of Music*.

Of the importance of Initiation Songs in other parts of the world Hambly gives sufficient evidence.

Feasting is associated with many of the Indian ceremonies, and a religious element is sometimes felt in the songs even when the occasion would seem to be secular. The Dakotas have a ceremony of gift-making, after which a feast is consecrated, and a song sung to summon the people together.

Another feasting song from the same source has the character of a simple eucharistic rite:

Father, thou
Look upon us,
Now partake we
Of the corn with thee.

However, the word Father must not be allowed to carry too divine a weight. We must bear in mind that Wakan Tanka does not mean God, but the Great Mystery. Miss Curtis says, moreover, that the word Grandfather is a word of very great respect, while what might be taken for an invocation to a deity is sometimes addressed to the spirit of the original ancestor of the tribe. Lawrence also noticed that what might be taken as a reference to a god actually referred to a being not very different from the Indian himself. A Pima chieftain told a story of the creation of the world, and it was a man who made it:

Then the man took the ball from the stick, and put it down in the darkness under his foot, and as he stood upon the ball he rolled it under his foot and sang,

I make the world, and lo!
The world is finished.

So he sang, calling himself the maker of the world. He sang slowly, and all the while the ball grew larger as he rolled it, till at the end of his song, lo! it was the world. Then he sang more quickly,

Let it go, let it go,
Let it go, start it forth.

PRIMITIVE MUSIC

LULLABIES

Of lullabies there are eight examples in *The Indians' Book*.

A Pawnee lullaby consists of two words only, Hao and Wari; but as the Indians have a symbol language—some words standing for a fairly complex idea—the content of that lullaby is a little less scant than would appear. Hao means sleep. Wari signifies the moving of the child to and fro.

A Kwakiutl mother is content with even less, and croons monotonously just Hao.

A Cheyenne lullaby is more personal :

Little good baby, he-ye!
Sleepy little baby, Aha hm.

sung to a simple tetrachordal tune; while a more elaborate version of the same song comes from the Arapahos, allies of the Cheyennes.

Two lullabies of the Kiowa Indians show further mental growth in both words and melody, though the same melodic scheme serves for both. One runs :

Hush thee child,
Mother bringeth an antelope
And the tid-bit shall be thine.

The other, which is more complicated in rhythm :

Baby swimming down the river,
Driftwood leggies,
Rabbit leggies,
Little rabbit leggies.

It should be noted that these English translations approximate fairly well to the musical rhythm, being rather better than such translations are wont to be.

Agriculture enters more fully into the lives of the Pueblo Indians than into the lives of the Indians of the plains. Accordingly the Pueblos have songs of a more imaginative nature. They serve our purpose as

links between the songs of the Indians and the more developed songs of a peasantry. From the Hopis comes this lullaby:

Sleep, sleep, sleep.
In the trail the beetles
On each other's backs are sleeping.
So on mine my baby, thou.
Sleep, sleep, sleep.

The Hopi mother had seen beetles carrying each other in the hot sun, and thought that those being carried were asleep. She associated them with her own lullaby because she carried her baby bound to a board which was fastened to her own back. To lull the child she swayed to and fro.

WORK AND SONG

Indians being mostly hunting folk have few working-songs; but among the agricultural groups there are songs of corn-grinding. Here is one from the Zuni tribe:

O my lovely mountain, Yallane!
O my lovely mountain, Yallane!
High up in the sky
See Rainmakers seated,
Hither come the rain-clouds now,
Heya, heya, hey!
Behold yonder
All will soon be abloom
Where the flowers spring.
Tall shall grow the youthful cornplants.

That is sung, Miss Curtis says, as the women kneel and rub the grinding stones one upon the other. At a corn-grinding party those who are not engaged with the work join in the chorus.

At such gatherings the youths sometimes sing, or play the flute and drum, while the maidens ply the stones, and when the grinding is done the maidens dance.

The above is a traditional song, sung to the collector by white-haired women of eighty years. Its religious nature is evident. It was perhaps once an invocation to the Rainmakers, who were the spirits of dead Zunis, appearing masked with cloud, their faces too holy to be seen by their living descendants.

Associated with the corn-grinding songs, but not songs of actual labour, are the invocations to the Corn-people Gatzinas—mythological beings who are impersonated in the ceremonial dances of the San Juan Indians, 'the dancers wearing masks decorated with emblems of cloud, lightning, rainbow, and other symbols.' These are songs of greater mystery, and are sung to meaningless vocables.

Considering the importance of hunting in the Indian life it is surprising to find in this collection only two songs relative to the chase. There is the Navajo Song of the Horse:

How joyous his neigh!
Lo, the 'Turquoise Horse of Johano-ai!
How joyous his neigh!
There on tips of fair fresh flowers feedeth he.

and unlike most of these songs, this has several verses. From the same tribe comes the only real hunting-song, a musical luring of wild creatures:

Comes the deer to my singing,
Comes the deer to my song.
.
.
.
From the Mountain Black,
From the summit,
Down the trail coming now, coming now,
Comes the deer to my singing.

This is not the only Indian song which suggests that a quarry may be decoyed by means of music. In that song, important as it is from the point of view of Indian life, there is no religious feeling; but the Song of the

Horse was associated with admiration, if not with worship, of the sun; for the Indian praises the horses of the spirit of the sun 'that he also may have splendid horses.'

I wonder if the scarcity of Indian songs relating to the hunt, and the absence of any real hunting-song, may be due to the fact that animals have mystical associations in the Indian mind. In the songs of the animal 'societies' there was a feeling of superstitious respect for the world of beasts. Hunting-songs would seem to mark an advance in rationalistic expression.

Lawrence referred to the song of a man who was returning home from a bear-hunt. He said that it celebrated, not that particular occasion, but 'all men, all bears'; and of course the more generalized the expression, the nearer we find ourselves to the primitive communal life, and to a religious mood.

Though working-songs are apparently little used by North American Indians, primitive specimens have been reported from other quarters.

The Andamanese compose simple songs, improvising as they work. Here is one:

Knots are very hard to cut with an adze.
They blunt the edge of the adze.
How hard I am working, cutting these knots.¹

Examples of that kind of music may be heard among all peoples, including our own children. Here is one made by an English child of three years:

O the photograph sitting
And the photograph knitting,
And the photograph flitting,
And the photograph—

which was abruptly ended, apparently for lack of another rhyme.² Like the vague humming and

¹ From *The Andaman Islanders*, by A. R. Brown, quoted by Hambly.

² From *Child Music*, by William Platt.

whistling many of us make when we are intent upon a job, such songs can scarcely be reckoned as having any real connection with the actual labour.

More to the point are the rowing-songs mentioned by Hambly, Trader Horn, and others, where the rhythm has a practical value.

My brother heard a building-song of that practical kind in Mashonaland. The roof of a hut had been fixed to four poles. The roof was made of leaves, and not very strong. That the poles might be raised to the vertical without unequal strain on any part of the roof, the natives sang a song which seems to have served the same purpose as the shanties of sailors. By means of certain stressed notes simultaneous movements were made, until the structure was in the required position.

No religious implication seems to have been noticed in these rowing- and building-songs; nor in the song about the adze. They were men's songs. The religious corn-grinding songs were sung by women, and were, moreover, ancient and traditional pieces.

LOVE-SONGS

There are thirteen love-songs in *The Indians' Book*, including two dance-songs for wedding festivities. Of the latter one is secular, the other has religious reference.

Here is the love-song of a Wabanaki who is about to part from his sweetheart because he is going on a long winter hunt:

Look up the river, look oft and oft.
In spring at the breaking of the ice look oft.
You may see me coming down in my canoe.
Look oft up the river, look anew, anew.

Of four Dakota love-songs three, and perhaps the fourth, are women's songs, though three of them were

sung to Miss Curtis by men. The most distinctive is the following:

Nay, love, but whither are you leading me?
My own husband loves me, he whom I have left.
Leave me, for he loves me.
Leave me, let me go.
O, leave me.

The love-songs of the Kiowas have a significance of their own. Some of them are known as Wind-songs. Another is a war-path song. The Wind-songs are apparently composed by the men for their women to sing during times of absence. Some are very old, with archaic words. One will serve as example:

Idlers and cowards are here at home now.
Whenever they wish they see their beloved ones.
O, idlers and cowards are here at home now.

Idlers and cowards are here at home now;
But the youth I love is gone to war, far hence.
Weary, lonely, for me he longs.

The war-path song is a humorous ditty, supposed to be sung by a girl because an aged admirer is trying to bribe her father to exchange her for a gift of doubtful value:

Ah, I never, never can forget
The playful word you spoke long since.
This man who seeks to marry me,
He with his sore-backed ponies,
What's he to me!

The love-songs of the Winnebagos are quoteworthy. One consists of a single line:

Mother, let me go to my uncle.

Another offers a striking example of the fact that in their love-songs the original, communal mood of Indian music is becoming personal and dividual:

Whomsoc'er I look upon,
 He becomes love-crazed.
 Whomsoc'er I speak unto,
 He becomes love-crazed.
 Whomsoc'er I whisper to,
 He becomes love-crazed.
 All men who love women,
 Them I rule, them I rule.
 My friend,
 Whom I touch, whom I touch,
 He becomes love-crazed.

A Hopi love-song, sung to Miss Curtis by the actual composer, is the most beautiful of all:

Now for corn-blooms we wrestle.
 We are youths, mid the corn,
 Chasing each other in sport,
 Playing with butterfly-maidens.
 Hither, hither!
 Thunder will hither move,
 We shall summon the thunder here,
 That the maiden-plants
 Upward may help one another to grow.

We are told that the composer of that song is 'untouched by foreign influences.' Certainly the words seem more intense with traditional feeling than any of the others. The song is also a dance, and the references to thunder and corn-maidens relate the piece to a butterfly-ballet which is periodically held from noon to sundown in the chief open space of the village. The dancing maidens wear cloud-symbols on their heads, and move timidly, while the youths dance with a high springing step.¹

Of the Indian love-songs this is the only one couched in an impersonal manner, which is the more surprising in view of the fact that it is a freshly composed piece. Religious feeling is evident in the animistic imperative of the last line but two. It is worth noting that in this, the only love-song with an element of super-

¹ Compare with the Zuni corn-grinding song on p. 13.

stition in it, is also a dance. The more personal love-songs are evidently not associated with dance. In their love-songs, as in the Navajo hunting-song, it would seem that Indian singers forget the superstitious background of their lives.

This is an important matter for this particular study. Here, as in later developments of musical art, we find that the melodic impulse is associated with the desire for dividual expression. Wherever primitive music is properly established it is on a basis of rhythm, and with a view to communal and religious expression. Out of that rhythmic art is growing a more personal and melodic art.

The difference between the impersonal, communal, and religious nature of love-dances and the personal, dividual, and rational tone of love-songs may also be noticed in the evidence accumulated by Mr Hambly. He quotes this Burmese love-song :

Thou fairest and best,
More precious than rubies !
Thou choice of my heart,
I pray thee now listen,
While I weave in fit measure
The smooth, flowery cadence,
My tender, sweet song.

and there follows a Maori song of 'a maiden on a lonely rock, who found she could not launch a canoe to paddle to her lover.'

The girls of Kamschatka 'declare their passion to their lovers, their grief, hope, and other affections' in songs; but their love-dance is a very primitive affair. It consists of two women kneeling on a mat, 'holding a little tow in each hand. At first they sing very low, moving slightly their hands and shoulders. By degrees they raise their voices, and increase the motions of their bodies, till they are quite out of breath and fatigued.' ¹

¹ Quoted by Hambly from the *History of Kamschatka*, by Krashinnikoff.

Of sexual dances nothing is recorded by Miss Curtis. Nor is there any hint of a definitely sexual element in the three Indian dances described in Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico*, though in the Dance of the Sprouting Corn both sexes participate, sometimes in couples. The impression made on Lawrence was of 'the mystery of germination, not procreation.'

In all this there is nothing of the realistic sexual dances referred to by Hambly—dances which in their time and place were 'not an accessory of communal life, but its very essence'; so either the Indians had outgrown the more primitive forms of æsthetic sexual expression, or they were withheld from Miss Curtis, who in any case was recording their songs rather than their dances.

For our understanding of the more primitive dances, as well as our understanding of their finer and later outgrowth in song, we must remember that they were religious ceremonies, like nearly every other primitive dance; that 'they express what is to the savage a part of the highest morality, and do in fact serve useful tribal and personal functions.'¹

In a certain aspect the ecstasy of sexual passion is associated with an ecstasy in defiance of death. Of this we have expression in some of the finest works of art, such as Wagner's *Tristan* and Synge's *Deirdre*. There is a suggestion of such emotional experience in a primitive form in Seabrook's *The Magic Island*:

A thing which had a different, a horror-beauty like a mad Goya etching, occurred when the black priestess did her death-dance with the huge white turkey. . . . Her fatal hands were still upon its throat and in that swanlike simulacrum of the deed which for the male is always a little like death, it died.

This is an extreme example of the fact that nearly all, perhaps all, of the most moving works of great art

¹ Hambly, chapters on Sex and Society, and Music, Magic, and Medicine.

have their emotional germ in the most primitive life and ideas. Real music, real art of any kind, has certain fundamental roots in human nature from which we cannot break away.

We find the savage emotional experience of that Voodoo death-dance becoming a noble and personal tenderness, even as the savage passed from the practice of wild and syncopated complications of rhythm to a conception of the possibilities of melody. He did not forswear his rhythmic background as he arrived at a finer form of music; but unless there occurred some definite retrogression in his mentality he did not sacrifice the finer to the baser element—and when I say baser I mean simply the element which is the base of music, as sex is the base of love.

FIGHTING-SONGS

If numbers are any criterion, the war-songs of the Indians are next in importance to their religious-songs. Indeed, the fighting-songs are also religious.

‘ If the Indian prays in common acts of life, how serious and devout he is upon the war-path, when life, and more than life—renown and honour—are at stake. Before setting out on the war-path religious ceremonies are performed, and the protection of the supreme being is invoked. Every night upon the war-path prayers are made, and every morning each warrior renews his supplication and his consecration.’

(*The Indians’ Book*, p. 154.)

The Pawnees have a series of dance-songs, forming a kind of ballet in honour of young warriors. The words of the final dance are:

O Father, thou dost rule supreme,
None greater, thou dost rule supreme.
Can there be any over thee?
O Father, can there greater be than thou?
None greater; thou dost rule supreme.

The word 'Atius,' translated Father in that song, does not mean God. It refers to Father Sun. The same word in an agricultural song of the same tribe means Father Hawk. The feminine Atira likewise signifies Mother Moon or Mother Corn, according to the nature and direction of the invocation. The word Atius in another song refers to a prophet who started a new religious movement.¹

A Coyote war-song is also a song of blood-brotherhood. It was made by an older, and 'given' to a younger warrior, that the latter might sing it when he felt the need:

O great expanse of the blue sky!
See me roaming here
Again on the war-path, lonely.
I trust in you; protect me.

There is nothing of hatred or blood-thirst in these war-songs. Similarly, the songs of victory are less concerned with celebrating triumph over a foe than pointing the moral for cowards of the victorious tribe. Of three Cheyenne Victory-Songs two point a finger of scorn at cowardice. This is one:

Who are these
Who stand and gaze at us?
Who are these
With red paint thick upon them?
By day in the sight of all men
Went we forth to war.

the allusion being to the red-painted warriors who stayed at home, the singers having blackened their faces with ashes as a sign of victory.

Another Victory-Song has a less noble sound:

Ho ye! Hear ye, O wolves!
Feast! Be merry.
Ye ho! Gather at the dawn.

¹ See p. 26.

but that may have been less ugly than it seems; for the chief of the Cheyennes was called High Wolf, and the song was perhaps a call to their totem-beasts.

Derision is, according to Hambly, a potent influence against cowardice among savage people; but with more primitive folk than the Indians it is sometimes directed at the defeated enemy. Trader Horn tells of an occasion when his black West African lad, Iwolo, made a victory-song to the words 'The cheek of a slave always comes to grief.'

Whether savage war-music is, or is not, an exercise and incitement, seems to be in question. Lawrence got an impression that the Indian war-dance had a different, and more religious function.

When two braves executed such a dance, it seemed, after all, to be less a striving of one against the other than the self-assertion of each against the universe. The two men seemed to Lawrence neither to be stating their courage as warriors, nor to be proving their skill at arms, but declaring each his own pride in his separate personality, and his defiance of a hostile external world. And it seemed to Lawrence that the same spirit was transmitted by the dance to those other Indians who merely looked on.¹

Hambly takes the other view, that the war-dance is an intentional vehicle of discipline to a communal and warlike end. Certainly the Maori war-dances which were to be seen in London somewhere about 1910 gave the impression that the dancers were working up feelings of fight.

But Hambly also adds that though the war-dance may be traced in most places where primitive man has left his mark, he has not come across it in connection with peoples of the lowest culture.

As we shall presently meet with evidence which supports Lawrence's idea, it may be that musical war-

¹ *Mornings in Mexico*, p. 109.

exercises, absent from intentions of man in a very early stage of development, become later of deliberate importance, taking an added and religious aspect in some cases. Lawrence admitted that the dance was 'practice as well as mystery'; and we should expect to find in the songs a finer and more conscious mentality.

The lack of hatred in the Indian fighting-songs, coupled with the fact that such derision as is expressed is not directed at the enemy, would seem to indicate a warlike spirit which arises, not in mere love of bloodshed, but in conditions of life which make some fighting inevitable, as when a hunting people must raid another territory for food, or starve.

That suggestion would seem to be supported by the fact that Miss Curtis collected no fighting-songs from the Pueblo Indians who live chiefly an agricultural life.

SONGS OF DEATH

Of the nine Songs of Death in *The Indians' Book* two arose in a personal incident.

A young warrior, member of the Fox Society, was being carried home, mortally wounded, and he made this song:

Lo, the Fox, the Fox am I!
Still the Fox a moment yet,
Then the Fox shall be no more.

Personal in expression; yet communal in the feeling that the Society of which he is a member is more important than he. His comrades celebrated his death in a dance, of which these are the words:

Ha, you hunters!
All you hunters fled.
Yea, but the Fox fled not.
There, behold, he lay!
Ha, you fled!
But there behold he lay!

which seems as little personal as the song of the warrior himself.

The following was sung by an Indian to inform those concerned that the old woman he was bringing in his wagon was dead :

Whom, oh whom shall I now call grandmother?

Grandfather and grandmother are Indian terms of ultimate respect.

Death of warrior and death of woman—what other death was worth an Indian song?

Reference has been made to a late religious movement among the Indians. It was known as the Ghost-dance movement. Some of its songs were collected by Miss Curtis.

Thus far even the most superstitious of the Indian songs have been concerned with the material lives of the Indians on the earth. The Ghost-dance songs have another character. They offer a primitive example of that mental tendency which, when men are baulked of a good real life, seeks consolation in a future and spiritual state of being.

When the Indians finally realized, towards the end of the nineteenth century, that they were a lost people, who had been unable to withstand the war-weapons of the whites, and could not always be sure even of keeping their reservations and racial culture, there arose among them a prophet who promised a better life in the world of ghosts. Their own natural tendency to rationalize and outgrow their superstitions seems to have been checked by the superstitions of their white supplanters. The Indians, puzzled by the contradictions between Christians and Christianity, decided that the White Christ had been denied by His own people; that it was themselves He came to save. The acceptance by so many tribes of this new doctrine tended to unify them, and the American Government

envisaged trouble. There ensued what was known as the massacre of Wounded Knee, when 'machine-guns at close range mowed down the entire camp, blowing the victims to pieces.'

Of that episode certain songs remain; and they are the only songs in *The Indians' Book* which are tinged with sadness, though the prevailing mood even in these is of prospective joy. The three Dakota songs may be taken as typical.

I

Thus the Father saith,
Lo, he now commandeth
All on earth to sing now.
Thus he hath spoken.
Tell afar his message.

II

Mother, O come back!
Little brother calls
As he seeks thee weeping,
Saith the Father.

III

Hey! Hey!
Joyous feast we now,
Eating pemmican.

This particular 'Father' was the prophet who inaugurated the Ghost-dance movement. The cries in the second song were the result of visions seen in trances which resulted from the excitement of the dance. In the last song the Indians are fed with heavenly manna, compensation for the food denied them in the loss of their earthly hunting grounds.

Judging by the Indian Songs of Death primitive man is not concerned to make a song about morbid matters except under much pressure. The warrior's song was

stoical. The song about the dead woman was by way of advertisement. Only in the ghostly songs of the Indian subjugation is there a real stirring of morbid emotion, and even they dwell on the happier possibilities which death may bring about. We may recall the statement of the Dakota chiefs that among the songs which were to be sung by all men were those which 'make strong the heart to meet danger, grief, and death.'

'Death is as nothing,' retails Miss Curtis in another place. And yet there seems to be a generally accepted idea that most religions arise in the fear and wonder of death. Whether it is the Christian crying 'Since by man came death,' or the anti-Christian stating that the origin of all religions is in the 'stiff interrogation of the corpse,'¹ all thinkers seem agreed that the mystical impulse which eventually branches into science, law, and beauty is stirred less by the coming of that which has not been, than by the departing of that which has been. No one will dispute the religious nature of the North American Indian; but in their songs death has had only the significance which pride and contempt gave to it, until the Christian invader brought demoralization.

We may wonder if the Indian had previously overcome the morbid element of an earlier religion, even as Hellenism 'swept away a large part of the worship of the dead'?² Do the large number of death-dances performed in Tibet, India, Melanesia, Africa, even in North America, and described by Hambly, testify that at a certain stage of human development death is respected as wholly as it is despised by the Indian? The example he gives from North America may perhaps serve as a link between the more primitive and rhythmic religion and the attitude of the Indians.

¹ Llewelyn Powys, *The Pathetic Fallacy*.

² Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*.

'With the Salish, who dwell on the West Coast of North America, tribal and family bereavement are recognized by a death-dance, which follows a mortuary feast, and distribution of small gifts provided by the nearest of kin to the deceased. Feasting is the order of the day, and during the banquet songs composed by the chief mourners are sung in commemoration of the deceased as a hunter, fighter, and wrestler. After the meal all guests dance to music composed by the nearest relatives of the dead. . . . Music gives place to games, which are in progress for several days, at the end of which period wrestling, racing and gymnastics bring the ceremonies to a close.'¹

The morbid element even in that celebration seems to have been reduced to a minimum; and, for that matter, the religious element also. Besides the death-dance there are songs in praise of the deceased. That kind of thing is not confined to savages, even if civilized mourners are not always able to make their own music for the eulogistic elegies.

Here is a Maori death-song, as fine as the Celtic folk-elegies to be considered in the next chapter:

Brightly flashed the lightning's spear
On Turamoe's peak.
Portent of warrior's death and woman's woe.
O, Tiopira, why didst thou fall?
Thou who stoodst so boldly forth
In the bows of the canoe;
And thou, Hapeta, cold thou liest.
Death spread his lure for thee,
'The dragon of the cave was loosed on thee.

There we have a note of regret nearer akin to our own civilized death-songs—a note which is only sounded by the Indian once, in the second of the Ghost-dance songs; and that had been induced by the action and religious influence of the white man.

The most poignant note I have come across in any savage death-song is quoted in Seabrook's *The Magic Island*. Of human sacrifice in connection with death-

¹ Quoted by Hamblly from *British North America* by C. Hill Tout.

song I know of no example; ¹ but this Voodoo song relates to such a sacrifice made vicariously:

The wild pig came seeking me.
I said, Why have you come?
'Everyone is sick in Leogane.'

The second verse has similar words, the questing animal being a bull. Then

The wild goat came seeking me.
I said, Why have you come?
'Everyone is sick in the mountains.'

So I who am not sick must die.

a goat being subsequently sacrificed instead of the girl. Seabrook thinks she was 'extemporizing both the words and the melody.' Here then we have one of the most primitive and savage religions which strikes a note that is more familiar in our own civilization. We are reminded of Iphigenia and, as Seabrook remarks, of Jephthah's daughter. But this kind of song does not seem common in savage death-ceremony, which is concerned with much more practical things. And we must notice that the Voodooists in Haiti have been in contact with Christian civilization.

A sensible turn is given to the funeral dance of a Congo tribe. It is women who are pioneers in agriculture here as everywhere. When death comes to a woman of this tribe who has achieved notable success in that direction, the mourners wind up their death-dance with a procession to the ground which she had tilled, and proceed to plant 'a large patch of cassava for the use of her family.' ²

Hambly regards death-dances as rites in propitiation of the dead, or as invocations to the spirits of men

¹ Parry in *The Art of Music* refers to a cannibal song of rising quarter-tones; but that would seem to have been wordless.

² Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals*, quoted by Hambly.

already dead that they may be induced to receive the new-comer in a friendly way.

Accepting that as probable, and remembering that songs generally express a later development than dances do, it would appear that while the Indians, like the Chinese, have great respect for their dead ancestors, they are not greatly concerned with the incident of death itself.

The melodies of the Indian Ghost-dance songs show a great advance upon the song of the Fox Society. The last named is an obvious development of the primitive howl-motive; whereas the Ghost-dance songs are noteworthy for their rising intervals.

One other musical detail: Hambly and Seabrook both referred to songs which were improvised or composed by persons who were not necessarily musicians. A chief mourner had to make a song as a matter of course. Music, therefore, was not the exclusive business of the holy men. However, it is probable that a recognized number of melodic outlines served as a groundwork whereon the average person could make original, but not novel songs. The Hindoo Ragas are used in a like manner; and a not dissimilar method has been pursued by English folk-singers.

SONGS OF SECULAR CEREMONY AND AMUSEMENT

Seven ceremonial songs of a secular character are included in *The Indians' Book*. The following was originally made as a victory-song:

Charged the foe;
But I made a woman of him.

That song of triumph over a beaten enemy is significantly dropped in its original connection, and is sung instead on ceremonial occasions when men narrate the tales of great deeds and make gifts to one another.

It is followed by the song mentioned on p. 10 which calls the whole village to a feast.

There are songs of greeting to strangers, and two dance-songs made in honour of a white American who had obtained from President Theodore Roosevelt a promise that the tribe should have security in their reservation.

The corroborees of the Australians were also musical ceremonies of welcome, generally to other tribes to whom they made a present of the song which subsequently might only be sung by the tribe to which it had been given.

Among the Indian songs of secular amusement the hand-game songs are outstanding. Some of the tribes still regard this game as a religious ceremony; and in certain details it still proves its original nature.

The opening hand-game prayer asks that the game shall be played as divinely revealed, and that to the people may be given happiness, good luck, health, welfare and old age.

(*The Indians' Book*, p. 161.)

but it has now become a means of passing pleasantly some of the long winter evenings. The same applies to the Barter-Song, a comedy game; a Swinging-Song, originally a rat call;¹ and to the various dancing-songs which make up the remainder of these Indian songs of play.

There are also songs of a topical nature, made in order to memorize incidents which otherwise might be forgotten.

Hambly tells of American Indian songs which, like the Congo funeral song mentioned on p. 29, are in the nature of benefit performances for distressed members of the tribe.

The same author refers to dances in which exhibition of personal skill takes the place of religious, and even

¹ Compare the deer-call in the Hunting-Song on p. 14, and Lawrence's description of the Hopi Snake Dance.

of emotional, content. These exhibition dances come chiefly from civilized lands—from India, Burma, Turkestan, Persia, China, and Japan, where ‘dancing is not a form of expression for the community as a whole, as is the case among the aborigines of Australia, the Papuans, Melanesians, most African tribes and the native Indians of South America.’ It would seem that the exhibition dance, wherever it occurs, may, like the Indian hand-game, be the degenerate survival of an art which was once expressive of real human feeling, and may or may not have had religious implications in its inception.

Music also forms an accompaniment to gambling games in some places.

Akin to the exhibition dances are degenerate dances, probably sexual in their origin, which are now mere displays of muscular control.

Trader Horn gave an amusing description of exhibition dances by bushmen—sword-dances which read like descriptions of English and Scottish dances, of a spinning-ball dance, and a muscle-dance. Of the last-named he wrote:

Firstly he gave us a muscle-dance, moving the muscles of his breast, first the right one then the left one, always keeping time with the music of the native harp. Then the breasts, first right then left, began to pop in and out, the stomach began to keep time, after this the muscles of the arm, then left eye right eye, then left toe right toe, all keeping time with the music seemingly without an effort. We all cheered. Now he turned adroitly half round, all the muscles of his body answered his wish without effort. Next he commenced to bob up and down from the ground, firstly a four inches then a foot then he bobs up and down like an Indian Rubber ball always in time with the music. He then spun like a top on his left toe Keeping the right leg extended at a perfect right angle. No lighter than a feather one mass of motion he leaped in the air and danced on the swaying banana branch until turning a complete Somersault, every mussel in his body still moving he lighted on the ground.

(The Ivory Coast in the Earlies, p. 72.)

That would seem to have as much relation to the physical development of the tribe as a professional athlete's training to the general fitness of his nation. The old communal dances may certainly have had a beneficial, and perhaps intentional effect; but these exhibition dances suggest an expression of personal and dividual will which means that dancing has come to an end of its development. Such dividual expression offers no such further possibilities of development as is offered by the equally personal nature of the melodic impulse. In those dances we have an early sign that art-for-art's-sake has an amusing place in life, but can only spin itself to an inbred end.

Savages have attained such rhythmic development as has only rarely if ever been reached in later growths of expressional art. Examples of some of their complicated polyrhythmic ideas are given by Mr Fox Strangways.¹

Having reached such a full development of their original communal spirit, and discovering a desire for personal expression, a means has to be found for the satisfaction of that desire within the limits of the general well-being. Personal rhythmicities which extend beyond the common capacity may have a certain value, but, like the exhibition dances, they finally separate the person from his fellows. The melodic faculty which is common to all offers means for the development of personality within the original, communal, rhythmic art.

¹ Introductory Volume to *The Oxford History of Music*.

PART II

REALITY IN FOLK-MUSIC

A NATURAL tendency to classify British folk-music according to nationality will be found not to work when the songs themselves are examined.

The folk-songs of Northern England are nearer in character, both in verse and music, to the songs of Lowland Scotland than to the songs of Southern England. The songs of the Scottish Highlands are nearer akin to those of Ireland and Man. Welsh folk-music is not so easily placed, partly because it has been badly collected and arranged. The Welsh have yet to discover their Kennedy-Fraser or their Cecil Sharp. However, in one or two small recent collections, there is evidence that, despite some details in common with English music, Welsh folk-song has deeper affinities with the music of other Celtic lands.

So the most likely divisions of British folk-music will be based on the following geographical arrangement:

1. England south of the Mersey and Humber;
2. Northumbria including Easterly Lowland Scotland; and
3. All the Celtic lands.

As with primitive song, I propose to consider some of these folk-songs according to the outstanding subject-matter of their verse. There will be no songs of secular ceremony; they have disappeared with the growth of a dividual art. Songs of amusement will be restricted to children's games, which, like many folk-dances, are sometimes survivals of primitive religious rites. Songs

of feasting can no longer be classified as religious, but must be transferred to Songs of Work: the feasting of agricultural folk has not the religious character it had with primitive people, but has a very close connection with achieved labour.

Again, as with primitive song, I propose to consider mainly a single representative collection of folk-songs in each of the three geographical divisions, referring to other separate examples of song for the sake of any additional light they may throw upon the matter. The chief English collection will be the *English County Songs* edited by Lucy Broadwood and Fuller Maitland, excluding the songs of the Northern Counties. This collection includes a few numbers which would be rejected by puristic collectors; but those songs (with one or two obvious exceptions which I shall leave out of consideration) were included because they were sung by country-singers as part of their repertory of folk-song; and the fact that they show the reaction upon folk-art of town-life and theology makes them of special advantage to this study. Dr W. G. Whittaker's *North Country Ballads* offers a suitable Northumbrian collection. The obvious Celtic collection will be the *Kennedy-Fraser Songs of the Hebrides*, of which I shall use Volumes I and II.

RELIGIOUS SONGS

Excluding the songs of the Northern Counties, there are eighty-four songs in the *English County Song Book*. Of those, eight at most can be called religious, though four others have passing religious references.

Five of the eight religious songs are Christmas and May-day carols. One is a song relating to All Souls' Day, and so primitive in character that it is probably a survival from pagan times, the more likely because it is a children's begging song. Another song, 'Dives and

Lazarus,' must be mentioned here, but further reference to it will be made when considering the Death songs. Finally the very interesting and important theological song, 'The Twelve Apostles.'

That of eight religious songs three should be examples of Christmas carol and two others of the Spring festival is a sign of the major importance of those festivals, dating from pre-Christian times, among agricultural people. The paramount importance of the winter festival during the Christian era is to be noted.

'The Souling Song,' from Cheshire, is also a pagan survival:

A soul, a soul, a soul-cake!
Please, good missus, a soul-cake!
An apple, a pear, a plum, or a cherry,
Any good thing to make us merry,
One for Peter and two for Paul,
And three for him who made us all.

Fraser, in *The Golden Bough*, gives information showing the universality of the Festival of All Souls. It was originally a pagan feast which the Christian Church tried, but failed, to supplant by the Festival of All Saints.

Having gathered his harvest, primitive man seems to have wished his dead friends to have a share. So he put food out for them, and when they had eaten all they wanted the remainder was sometimes given away. A Belgian celebration still includes the eating of soul-cakes. Its survival in Cheshire is associated with so primitive a tune that the music, as well as the rite, may well be a survival from pagan times. Now it has lost its original meaning the tradition has been maintained by the children:

The lanes are very dirty,
My shoes are very thin;
I've got a little pocket
To put a penny in.

If you haven't got a penny
 A hapenny will do;
 If you haven't got a hapenny
 It's God bless you.

That is a type of the religious song which expresses the small religious feeling of the people themselves. But there is another type which shows the interaction of Christian theology and the popular imagination. 'The Twelve Apostles' is an extreme example of such a song:

I'll sing you one, O!
 Green grow the rushes, O!
 One is One and all alone,
 And ever more shall be so.
 Two, two for the lily-white boys
 Clothed all in green, O!

and so on, up to Twelve for the Apostles. Cecil Sharp, in his introduction to *English Folk-Carols*, points out that theology is an intrusion in folk-song. The natural voice of the folk-singer is realistic, and the existence of such a song as 'The Twelve Apostles' is a sign that external forces were brought to bear upon the original artistic activity. It may be the remains of a religious dance or mumming. It may have been an educational attempt of the medieval priesthood to impose arithmetic and theology at the same time. If so the folk-singers learned their figures, but made a hash of the diviner science, for the song as recorded in Dorsetshire and elsewhere shows that the greater part of its theological significance has been lost. For the original words have been substituted others more generally understood by the singers, but in the final result nonsense is made of the song as a whole.

Two melodies are associated with this song in the *County Song Book*—one straightforwardly English in feeling, the other of an ecclesiastical tone. The first is a strong broad tune in the major; the second, of narrow compass, is modal.

Of course these eight examples of religious folk-song do not exhaust English songs in that kind. There are such fine things as 'The Dance of Jesus' among theological songs, and a whole mass of folk-carols. But here we are only seeking to understand the proportion of religious to secular in the general body of English folk-song, and there is no reason to think that the editors of this collection sought to minimize the importance of religion in the minds of English country folk.

The proportion of religious songs would seem to be even smaller in Northumbria. In Dr Whittaker's collection, out of forty-seven songs, of which three are Christmas songs, there is only one which can be called religious. That is the well-known children's carol, 'I Saw Three Ships.' The other two Christmas songs are entirely secular.

On the other hand, there is a greater proportion of secular songs with religious allusions. Of these, one, 'The Laidley Worm,' refers to witchcraft; two others, 'King Arthur's Servants' and 'Lay the Bent,' refer to the devil. More significant, perhaps, are some of the border ballads which sanctify warlike stories by means of religious appeal:

Now Christes Cors on His Crowne,
Whosoever thereto says Nay,
By my trothe, doughte Doglas, he says,
Thou never shalt se that day.

cries Percy in 'Chevy Chase,' and is slain; but to avenge him King Harry the Fourth continues the ballad and the fight with the same religious faith in his own cause:

God have merci on his soll,
Good Lord, yf Thy will it be.
I have a hondrith captaynes in Ynglonde
As good as ever was he;
But Perse, and I brooke my lyffe,
Thy dethe well quyte shall be.

Similarly, in 'The Battle of Otterburn,' it is 'Jesu Chryste in heyvn' who comes to Percy's aid.

In the border ballads it is generally the perfect and gentle knights who carry on the game of blood and prayer; but in 'The Fair Flower of Northumberland' it is the rogue-knight who swears

by the blessed Trinity
That neither wife nor bairns have I.

Of the hundred songs in the first two volumes of *Hebridean Songs* eight are wholly devoted to religious ideas, twenty-two have religious references, and two are couched in terms which suggest an atheist outlook. Of the twenty-two songs with incidental religious interest, eleven refer to the pagan creed which preceded Christianity, nine to Christianity itself, while four are so phrased that the exact kind of belief is left uncertain. One song, which I should not have classified among the religious songs—'The Water-Kelpie'—refers to a grotesque creature which the editor regards as in some ways a counterpart of the devil.¹

Some of these Hebridean songs have been so beautifully translated by the literary editor, Mr Kenneth Macleod, that their authenticity as folk-songs might seem in dispute. But that would be to say that folk-songs are not made in our own time. In the *Folk-Song Journal* there is at least one contemporary Irish folk-song;² and the many contemporary songs in *The Indians' Book* are but more primitive examples of the kind of traditional song-evocation employed in certain cases by Kenneth Macleod. Moreover, as we shall see later, Mr Macleod is recognized by old Hebridean folk-singers as possessed of the same song-spirit as themselves.³ Of his imaginative power in the recreation of Celtic lore I can testify. He once made a walk along a rocky Scottish coast like a journey in dreamland.

¹ See p. 62.

² *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, III, 10, 36-8.

³ See p. 59.

It should be noticed that while the eight consciously religious songs are all Christian, the remainder, having only passing and perhaps scarcely intentional, religious reference, have a slightly preponderant pagan interest. To realize that difference the more fully, here is a verse of a Celtic Christmas carol:

Hey the bannock, Ho the bannock!
Hey the bannock, on the living
Telling us that Christ was born,
King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

There is no example of Hebridean song so wholly devoted to the expression of paganism. But, when we consider the incidental religious references, we find more songs with ideas of Tir-nan-Og and the færy-folk than with ideas of the Christian god and saints. Considering that Celtic Christianity is a much older thing than English Christianity, the perdurance of Celtic paganism is the more striking. One song, 'A Druid of the Isles,' tells an actual story of the passing of the old and the coming of the new doctrine. It is the lament of a pagan priest when he found that the Christian monks had seized his island.

Another song combines the acceptance of Christian theology with the savage joys of sea-piracy:

King of the elements, hear our prayer,
Steer the birlinn to Cala.
What and if she makes the shore,
Wild the deeds sure in Cala
All mateless the women,
Fair fresh men all lifeless.
Son of Mary, hear my prayer.

That song, which the editors call 'Reiving Rapture,' enables us to understand what Christian conversion meant in some cases; enables us also to understand the close connection persisting from primitive times, between religion and war, and musically glorified by song, as here in the border ballads and the verse just quoted.

LULLABIES

Sir Edmund Chambers tells us that woman, not man, is the characteristic folk-singer. 'Woman's are the greater number of the more leisured and rhythmical of the folk-occupations, and to her, the primitive sower of seed and planter of herbs, has always been assigned the chief part in that persistent ritual of agriculture.'¹

We have found the women of the Pueblo Indians making their songs including lullabies. To women also must be attributed the lullabies which are found in nearly every collection of folk-songs.

But England is a land without a lullaby. The nearest approach to an English folk-lullaby is the well-known

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes;
Smiles awake you when you rise;
Sleep pretty darling, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby.

That, however, is an adaptation by Chappell of words to a song of May Fair which 'was established as a fair in the fields behind Piccadilly in the time of Charles the Second. Chappell says that he 'therefore adapted an old lullaby'; but the old lullaby was apparently no nearer to the English cradle, for the original verse, instead of the third line as generally sung, ran 'Sleep, pretty *wantons*.'

Nor do the carols with their many sacred lullabies help. The lullaby-carols are mostly fifteenth century literary productions, and Cecil Sharp did not find himself able to include a single lullaby in his volume of English folk-carols. The Chester Carol, 'Qui creavit coelum,' said to be the oldest English carol, has been preserved in ecclesiastical form; but no collector seems to have come across it in folk-form.

As specimens of English folk-lullaby, then, there remain only a few nursery rhymes; and even they

¹ Essay on 'Some Aspects of Medieval Lyric' in *Early English Lyrics*.

bear witness to the fact that something had gone wrong with the babies of England quite early in the story of our native music.

Hushabye baby, thy cradle is green;
Father's a nobleman, mother's a queen;
Betty's a lady and wears a gold ring,
And Johnny's a drummer boy and drums for the king.

expresses nothing of mother-love such as we find in the song collections of most countries; while

Rockabye baby, on the tree-top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall,
Down will come baby, cradle, and all.

suggests a threat in the lullaby-world.

And indeed, though there are no English folk-lullabies, there exists a widely current song of infanticide. 'The Cruel Mother' is found in England, Scotland, and the Appalachian Mountains, as well as in Denmark and Germany:

She laid herself against a thorn,
And there she had two pretty babes born;
She had a penknife long and sharp,
And she pressed it through their tender hearts.
(*Folk-Song Journal*, II, 70.)

There are three lullabies in Whittaker's *North Country Songs*; but not one of them is a normal expression of mother-love.

'Dollia' is an amusing lulling-song, in which the mother shows herself to be a gossip and gadabout, attending to her baby between whiles:

Fresh aa come frae Sandgate Street,
Dolli, Dolli;
Ma best freends here to meet,
Dollia.

and another high-spirited humorsome lass, with her baby in a shawl, is heard singing in

Wrap up, rowl up,
Rowl up the feetie ont.
We never knew we had a bairnie
Till we heard the greetin' ont.
Red-lipped, rosy-cheeked,
Just like the mother ont;
Black-haired, knock-kneed,
Just like the father ont.

while even in the most sleepful of the three, 'Bonny at Morn,'

The bird's in the nest,
The trout's in the burn;
Thou hinders thy mother
In many a turn.

the singer is preoccupied with the cares of motherhood.

The mere use of apparently unloving terms with reference to the father of the babe is not necessarily a sinister sign. Many a north-country woman will speak so of the man she dearly loves; and if we had merely the songs above quoted to go by, it is only the third which would definitely signify unnatural feeling. But the lack of a tender lullaby is even more evident in the songs of Lowland Scotland.

'Anne Bothwell's Lament' is more concerned with the falseness of the father than the welfare of the babe. 'Can Ye Sew Cushions' expresses an even more harassed life than 'Bonny at Morn':

O can ye sew cushions,
And can ye sew sheets?
And can ye sing balaloo
When the bairnie greets?
Heigh ho! Heugh O!
What'll I do wi' ye?
Black's the life
'That I lead wi' ye.
Mony o' ye, little to gie ye.

Lady Nairne's 'Cradle Song' was made for a folk-tune, but is so far removed from the spirit of the folk that the authoress wrote of it: 'I beg the publisher will make no mention of a *lady*. . . . I cannot help in some degree undervaluing beforehand what is said to be a feminine production.' And this from an imitator of the original folk-singers!

From the Scottish Lowlands comes also a version of 'The Cruel Mother.'

Not until we examine the Celtic sections of British folk-song do we find lullabies expressing the warm gentle love of motherhood.

There are lovely lulling tunes in the Petrie collection of Irish folk-music, including the tragic 'Hushabye on the Tree-top'; but as the words are not given with the tunes they will not help us here. Nor will the many collections of Irish folk-song with words by modern poets be of service. The same applies to the available collections of Welsh and Manx song. However the Hebridean songs will offer sufficient evidence of what the folk-lullaby can be at its best. In these the mother is not merely crooning a drowsing babe—she is visioning his character and future, as in the 'Cradle Spell of Dunvegan':

Sleep, my little child,
 Hero tenderling;
 Dream, my little child,
 Hero fawnlike one;
 High on mountain brow
 Be thy stag-tryst,
 Speed thy yew-arrows
 Straight antlerwards.

and again in the lullaby, 'To the Cradle Lord of the Isles':

Child of Isla, falls the gloamin';
 Quiet thy sleeping, strong thy waking.

.

Thine be Jura, thine green Isla;
Far-flung isles from Lews to Arrian

Ne'er thy growth from cool of waters,
But from heat of woman's breast-milk.

or in the humbler attitude of the 'Coll Nurse's Lilt':

I will dance at thy bridal,
Auld wife though I be syne.
Woocers fine will come courtin'
But to nane will I gie thee,
Wanting herds o' cattle,
My blue-eyed gentle maiden.

Or a mother is associating her baby with all the lovely things she can think of, as in the 'Uist Cradle Croon':

Thou'rt my rowans, thou'rt my hazel-nuts,
Sleepy one, croon o' the water;
My berries brown, my cinnamon clusters,
Sleepy one, croon o' the water.

That a clan tradition influenced these songs is clear enough. The essential fact for our study is that they have been taken over and perpetuated by peasant women.

Even deeper emotions are sounded in two Hebridean lullabies which have no suggestion of chieftain-worship.

When first I heard Mrs Kennedy-Fraser sing these songs it was within sound of the Scottish sea. She was singing in Gaelic, which I do not understand. She announced simply 'A Hebridean Mother's Song'; and the expression of the song and the singing were enough to reveal the character of the piece. To quote her own published footnote:

'The woman, who in the song was singing to her child, had when she was a girl two lovers. The one she married went away as a soldier, and was supposed to have been killed. The other took his place in the affections of the woman. But the long-absent man unexpectedly returns, and the woman, hearing of his return, is singing this song to her child (which is not his

child) as he arrives at her cottage door. It is a song of passionate love for the child, and of as passionate desire that the husband were under the sod.'

In such a song folk-music reaches a power of emotional expression which we, who are born into the fulness of harmonic and instrumental art, are not ingenuous enough to appreciate unaccompanied. Rhythmic melody probably probed deeper into the heart than we have understood.

A powerful emotion at the other end of the scale of feeling is stirred by 'The Christ Child's Lullaby,' a simple expression of Christian art in its noblest application. This is no mere imposition of theology upon the song-genius of a people. It is an expression of the eternal magnificat which arises in a free mother's heart; and it reaches out from the symbolic Christ child to all babies—even, as in the legend which is associated with this song, to step-children. For a full understanding of it the reader must be referred to the story as told by Kenneth Macleod.

With such lovely folk-lullabies coming from the outer parts of the British Isles, it seems stranger than ever that England should not have a single good folk-lullaby to her credit, while the country that lies between England and the Celtic lands should have only worried song-expressions of mother-love.

WORKING-SONGS AND SONGS OF WORK

A line has to be drawn between songs made to accompany the actions of labour, and songs made to celebrate work already accomplished. It is conceivable that in a well-developed civilization music made to celebrate the fulfilment of a great public work would express a higher mentality than any song sung during the actual labour; but it is quite clear that songs associated with recurring physical movement have a

special psychological importance in the lives of a peasantry.

Actual labour songs have a rhythmical quality which cannot be gainsaid. They are generally connected with work of a continuous and monotonous nature, frequently of work, like mowing and rowing, undertaken by a few people acting together. Such work without song, or some other means of livening the higher brain-centres, must have a dulling and degrading effect upon those engaged. The association of song with such work not only eases and enlivens the work itself and makes the workers happier—it also causes the minds of the singers to dwell upon finer and more varied experiences, and so results in actual mental development.

Labour songs of the other kind, celebrating past work in time of leisure, may or may not be better in an æsthetic sense. Whether they indicate and foster a finer kind of human being will depend upon the tendencies suggested by the words, and the depth of feeling indicated by the music.

Now in so varied and representative a collection as the *English County Songs* there is about a score which express a moderate joy in work already done; but there are only one or two hawkers' cries to inspire work at the time of its doing. Such cries may reveal pride of spirit, but they are also chiefly a mode of advertisement, and of small significance when compared with real working-songs.

A few ballads like 'The Barkshire Tragedy' and 'Robin-a-Thrush' may possibly be remains of real working-songs, judging by the importance of their refrains. Of such barely possible working-songs there are four or five in the *English County Song Book*; but the fact remains that when this collection was made no song was recorded in association with actual labour.

The feeling which permeates the other kind of song—the song sung because of work already achieved—

is one of complete and humble subservience. This kind of song is often associated with the enjoyment of drink, as in this 'Harvest Song' from Wiltshire:

Here's a health unto our master, the founder of the feast,
We hope to God with all our hearts his soul in heaven may rest;
That all his works may prosper whatever he takes in hand,
For we are all his servants, and all at his command.
So drink, boys, drink, and see that you do not spill;
For if you do, you shall drink two, for 'tis our master's will.

and in that connection it seems significant to recall Cecil Sharp's statement that drinking-songs are seldom real folk-songs. The Bacchanalian element in songs about work, therefore, would seem to indicate some degeneration or influence foreign to the natural folk-singer.

A more independent quality is found when we pass from the songs of respectable employment to those which celebrate certain illegal activities; for a proportion of these English songs express the conditions of a dispossessed people, and apparently the more spirited the character of the song-maker the more rebellious a tone do we find in the song. Songs expressing hero-worship of poacher, smuggler, and pirate, and the exploits of Robin Hood are regular and outstanding features of English collections.

There is 'Ward the Pirate' in Vaughan-Williams' *Songs from the Eastern Counties*. He is fighting H.M.S. *Rainbow*:

O then the gallant *Rainbow*, she fired, she fired in vain,
Till six and thirty of her men all on the deck were slain.
Go home, go home, says Captain Ward, and tell your king
from me
If he reigns king on all the land, Ward will reign king at
sea.

There is 'The Sheepstealer' from Hammond's *Folk-Songs from Dorset*, who, after telling of his poverty, says:

I'll ride all around in another man's ground
And I'll take a fat sheep for my own;
I will end of his life by the aid of my knife,
O and then I will carry him home.
My children shall pull the skin from the wool,
And I'll be in a place where there's none;
When the sheriff's men come I will stand by my gun
And swear all I have is my own.

Such songs as these, showing the English folk-singer in a mood of revolt, are here classified with his working-songs because they show the peasant's reaction to the enclosure of his lands. They are, in fact, his Songs of Illegal Work.

Jusserand, in *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, describes the attitude of the minstrel to the popular mood of rebellion, which had made songs like those of 'Robin Hood' a chief part of his stock in trade. He says that the singing of such songs was not objected to in high quarters, so long as there was no attempt to follow up song by action. Indeed song was apparently looked upon as a kind of safety valve. 'Only ideas, like seeds of trees falling on the soil, are not lost, and the noble who had fallen asleep to the murmur of verses chanted by the glee-man waked up one day to the tumult of the crowd collected before London, to the refrain of the priest, John Ball; and then he had to draw his sword, and show by a massacre that the time was not yet come to apply these axioms, and that there was nothing in them but songs.'

Perhaps the most significant fact of these songs of revolt and illegality is their endurance and popularity in the English countryside within living memory. In the *County Song Book* there are songs which exemplify almost the entire gamut of class-feeling from the reserved statement of poverty and cunning of the fen-shooter, through the quiet argument and expostulation of 'Servingman versus Husbandman' wherein the agricultural worker asserts his greater worth

against the parasitical service of the footman, to the conscious condemnation of those by whom dispossession has been brought about.

In 'Lazarus'¹ a righteous adjustment is not made until after death; and the postponement of retribution may well be associated with the ecclesiastical tone of the song. But a more immediate remedy is suggested in 'The Spider,' of which here is the essential second verse:

The first that came into the net,
A silly fly, was slain;
The next that came, a hornet bold,
Soon broke the net in twain.
And so I oft-times wonder why
Are poor men brought to shame
While rich men live in vanity,
And all men praise their name.

Was it any wonder that the English folk-singer's most spirited songs were not of his work, but of his Robin Hoods, Pirate Wards, and suchlike hornet-men?

However, in spite of his praise of pirates, and smugglers, we find a different state of feeling if we pass from songs of the English worker on land to songs of his work at sea. The many collections of English sea-shanties show that singing accompanied work at sea more recently than on land. Indeed the reason why English collections of folk-song contain few, if any, real working-songs is, of course, due to the fact that no real effort was made to record our folk-music until long after the industrial revolution, when such songs had gone out of use and were probably forgotten; or, if remembered, were no longer associated with labour. There remained only the songs *about* work—mostly farmwork, with an occasional tune from the smithy where hand-labour has persisted until our own time.

The sea-shanties survived the land-labour songs

¹ See p. 70.

because united effort was needed for sails and anchor long after reapers and weavers had been supplanted by machines.

Passing northward we find no very different state of affairs, though we do find characteristic differences of emotion, the simple straightforwardness of the English peasant being replaced by a more alert mentality.

Whittaker gives no example of real working-song. There is a 'Weaving-Song' in the Boulton-Lawson *Songs of the North*; but that collection contains a very large proportion of Celtic songs. Burns wrote his 'Gallant Weaver' to a tune which in his time 'was popular among the looms of the West of Scotland'; but there again we get into Celtic territory.

On the other hand, Whittaker gives interesting examples of song which celebrate work, and one even of the right *not* to work, a kind of song of which Southern England seems to offer no example.

Following up the tradition which caused women to be the chief singers of working-songs on land, it is apparently chiefly they who in Northumbria sing about the work of their menfolk—fishermen, colliers, cobblers, and shepherds. The very naming of these employments suggests that among these northern folk the creative spirit of song has persisted during the transition from land-work to craft and trade. Thus in 'Buy Broom Buzzems' it is not the making but the selling that is celebrated. And here is a specimen verse from 'The Shoemaker,' his wife telling the tale:

His hands are like a cuddy's boughs,
His face is like the high-lowed leather,
His ears are like I don't know what,
His hair is like a bunch of heather.
Shoemaker, leather-cracker,
Stinking kit and rotten leather—
I wish a thousand deaths I'd died
Ere I had wed a shoemaker.

Casual labour is one of the fruits of capitalist industrialism, and rarely finds expression in song; but 'Adam Buckham O' is clearly the song of an odd-jobber:

It's doon the lang stairs,
And straight along the close,
All in Baker's entry
Adam Buckham knows.
Nancy carries watter,
Tommy cobbles shoes,
And Adam gangs about
Gatherin' in the news.

and if that does not bring to mind the picture of a slummy city by-way the reader can never have seen one.

Of the difference between the free conditions which caused men to make working-songs and the forced conditions which spoiled the joy they had in their work 'The Shoemaker' expresses something. But in 'Lavender's Blue' we have a song which takes us still further into the evil, and exposes the soul of the man who asserts his right to do no work:

Call up your men, diddle, diddle,
Set them to work,
Some to the plough, diddle, diddle,
Some to the cart;
Some to make hay, diddle, diddle,
Some to cut corn;
Whilst you and I, diddle, diddle,
Keep ourselves warm.

Does not that seem to be the song of a man who has learned how to become an employer? Is it the expression of his own candour? Or is it a satire by those whom he has set to work? And had this song anything to do with the use of the word diddle in the sense of swindle? And did Jeremy Diddler get his name from this song?

Moods of dispossession do not prevail in these northern songs as they did in the southland English, but they are

not entirely absent even here—for example in ‘When this Old Hat was New’:

It's near to fourscore years ago
The truth I do declare;
O, men they took each other's words
And thought it very fair.
Nae bonds nor bills were then required,
Then words were a' sae true;
But that was in my youthful days,
When this old hat was new.

but there is not the same degree of depression that is to be found in many English songs. The old man who counts the years on his hat has a twinkle in his eye. So has the lass who sings of her carter-lover,

Aye, but he's a bonny lad
As ever you did see,
Though he's sair frowsy freckled
And he's blind of an e'e.

while an indomitable spirit sings in ‘Gang to the Kye wi' Me,’ though this seems to be the song of a dispossessed feudal family:

Kine is now all our property,
Left by thy father's will;
Yet if we nurse it watchfully
We may win gear enough still.

But if the Northumbrian songs relating to work indicate a more spirited people, they seem to have fewer examples of rebel song than the southern English. Perhaps that side of the northern character finds expression enough in the border ballads which we have to consider presently with the Fighting-Songs. When nationalism prevails there is less class-feeling among the poor.

When we come to the Celtic folk-singer we find a strikingly different attitude to work. From the rest of Britain no working-songs; from Celtic lands plenty.

Petrie gives a number of ploughing, spinning, and weaving tunes from Ireland. They are apparently only the songs so described by the singers. The chances are that several of the songs and ballads of which he has merely noted the titles, tune-names, or first lines, were also working-songs; for, as we shall see in the case of the Hebridean, some of the best working-songs make no direct reference to the work with which they are connected.

An excellent little group of Welsh folk-songs edited by Mr W. S. Gwynn Williams contains a song called 'The Loom,' and a 'Miller's Song.' The first is an old man's song of farewell to his work. The 'Miller's Song' is offered by the editor 'to illustrate that class of song that was once so popular in the spacious kitchens of old farm-houses.' It is not a working-song; and in any case the work of a miller was not such as lent itself to singing. I doubt if there were even flail-songs in pre-milling days. The miller was in folk-song, as in fairy-tale, one of the rascals of the country-side.

From the Hebrides has been gathered the richest harvest of working-songs—the remains of what must once have been nearly as full a musical life as that of the North American Indians.

Kenneth Macleod says:

In the Hebrides labour and song went hand in hand; labour gave rise to song, and song lightened labour. . . . Labour is now being more and more divorced from song, and in the course of a few years the folk will be surprised to hear that their fathers and mothers once used song as a substitute for steam and electricity. . . . It is hardly necessary to say that the measure and time of the labour songs are suited to the special kind of work involved. In the spinning-song, for instance, the long drawn-out, gradually accelerating phrase culminating in a long pause, is evoked by the periodic rhythm of the spinning itself.

A large number of Hebridean songs and ballads are used for 'waulking,' the fulling and shrinking of the

woven cloth. Any song, we are told, will serve for waulking if its verse is short and its chorus long. Mrs Kennedy-Fraser gives an account of a waulking she witnessed in Barra in 1911:

The cloth to be shrunk was blanketing, and for the process a long narrow table had been improvised in a candle-lit barn. The women were seated on benches one either side. At one end stood a wooden tub in which the blanket was soaking in dilute ammonia. From the tub it was lifted and gathered in the hand like a thick woollen scarf, then stretched down the table to the far end, where turned back on itself it lay along the boards like an elongated U. The seated women, grasping in both hands the portion of thick scarf which lay before them, lifted it and began slowly to beat it rhythmically on the boards, the two sides alternating in movement.

An old woman, one of the two song-leaders, began to croon softly. As one listened a quaint refrain shaped itself, a theme fashioned in strong rhythmic and melodic outlines, calculated like a fugue subject to impress itself easily on the memory. This was caught up and repeated by the workers' *tutti*. A verse-phrase of a more recitative-like character, perhaps consisting of only eight syllables, was then intoned by the leader, and this was caught up by a second refrain, longer than the first, but again of a strongly rhythmical character. This in its turn was caught up and repeated in chorus. And now the leader sang the verse-portions only, leaving the refrains to the other women. But the musical interest was not yet exhausted, for the leaders skilfully varied the verse-themes. . . . As the workers get heated by the excitement of tone and rhythm, and carried away by the hypnotic effect of repetition, the work becomes more and more rapid, and the cloth passes rapidly round the table sunwise.

Having come to an end of one song, another was started. The thicker the cloth had to be, the more songs were needed to the waulking. Few songs for light wear, many songs for hard wear. Under such conditions music, not money, became the measure of value.

Some working-songs declare their purpose in their verse. Here is a weaving-song, apparently of a maid preparing her wedding outfit:

Wait to-day, love, till to-morrow,
Horo eicacan arin huo,
While I weave fine linen for thee, love.
Linen for thee, fine linen for thee, love,
Wait to-day, love, till to-morrow.

and here's a fragment of a milking-song sung in septuple time without pause :

Silken tether for my own heifer,
Rope of straw for the townland cattle,
Herdsman Patrick and Milkmaid Bridget
Sain you and save you and shield you ever.

There we have an emotional reversion to the attitude of the Indians in the association of working-songs with religion. The more important of the Hebridean working-songs refer neither to religion nor to the task itself, but quicken the minds of the singers by dwelling on other realities of life. The women at their spinning, weaving, and waulking sing of their loves, or a story of the sea :

Ho mo lennan, hey mo lennan,
Cries my sweetheart, Gille Calum,
Steersman of the *Oak* am I !
Ho mo lennan, seaman darling
Climbeth to the mast-top high.
I advise all you young lasses
Keep three sweethearts in your eye ;
And if one of them forsake you
Two for you still hopeful sigh.

while between each couplet comes the chorus :

Ho mo lennan, hey mo lennan,
Ho mo lennan, my new wooer.
Ho mo lennan, hey mo lennan.

Or they will sing an imaginative song of the færy-folk, still shyly half-believing. Here is part of a clapping-song—clapping being the process which follows when the cloth has been shrunken and folded :

Hame oor bottachan, hame cam' he.
 Ragin', scoldin', hame cam' he.
 (*angrily*) Ooav, ooav, ooavan ee,
 Heeree, ree, reee, ree, reevak,
 (*allarg*) Hooe oee
 Hame oor bottachan, hame cam' he.

and so angry or hungry is the little fellow that he proceeds to eat the millstones.

The men at sea or at farmwork sing of their women at home, the land they love, and even of natural beauty itself. Here is a rowing-song:

Who my heart has free from sorrow deep unbound,
 In her cooling ray faith and peace for me has found
 She lights the vale of sleep, her sure clear way stealing round,
 Who doth soothe my grief, looanyel sweet, the dreaming moon.

Regarding a reaping-song Kenneth Macleod writes:

'To the singing of a harvest song goes the life of the year, or of all the years—the summer that is gone, the winter that is coming; the ones who have sown but are not here to reap; the ones who will sow when the reapers that are will have been forgotten';

and so the reaping-song of the Gael is not entirely a joyous thing. But as the sickle plies the reapers chant:

Beauteous Morar, green thy coat is,
 Sheen' gold on thy forehead.
 Full O' bird-music thou in Beltane,
 Fragrant wi' dew-laden hazel.

and that is at least a sign that their minds are not being subdued to the toil of their hands.

The reference, already quoted, to Herdsman Patrick and Milkmaid Bridget, and this reference to Beltane, show that in the minds of the singers there still lingers a feeling of the time when all labour, and especially farm-labour, had a mystical aspect and the working-song was also a religious song. Both pagan and Christian references are found, but the later religion

is more openly expressed. It completely informs a 'Peat-fire Smoothing Prayer.' The smoothing is evidently the smothering of the fire at night—the packing of the peat that it may last alight till morning.

Smoor the fire, smoor the fire,
Smoor the fire as wanes the cruiskeen;
Jesu guide us through the sleep-land.

How deeply many a song has lain half-forgotten in the minds of the older folk may be judged from an account given by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser in her second volume. Having described how peculiarly adapted was the upbringing of Kenneth Macleod for his subsequent association with her in her life-task of collecting the Hebridean songs, she told of a visit to Eigg:

The old people, who all knew and loved him, not only gave him freely what they could recall, but from himself they heard so many half-forgotten lines and quaint tunes and refrains that, from the deeply disturbed depths of their lore-laden minds, songs and tales re-emerged that neither they nor their neighbours had thought of for years.

and of the songs collected on that occasion several had religious associations. In the same connection we may recall the fact that at one time waulking and clapping-songs were followed by a song of blessing, though it had been discontinued at the time of the visit just described.

SONGS OF LOVE

Material for a separate and special study is offered by the great quantity of folk love-songs. Here we need only take a glimpse of that field of emotion which is recognized as the most powerful incentive to song, and perhaps to all forms of art.

Of the twelve love-songs in the *English County Song Book* eight are women's songs. Of the eight two are

happy, one humorous, and five unhappy. Of the unhappy songs three suggest loss of maidenhood.

Two of the twelve songs are duets—'The Keys of Heaven,' and 'Twenty, Eighteen.' The first is happy, the second cynical.

Only two of the twelve are men's songs. 'As I Walked Out' is a happy song. The other, 'Sheepcrook and Black Dog,' is scarcely a folk-song, but a piece of ballad-tone dating from the period when country girls began to take domestic service in towns, and found themselves comparatively comfortable there—too comfortable to face life in a shepherd's cottage.

Of the four happy songs in this collection three end in marriage.

Whittaker's Northumbrian songs offer interesting differences when compared with the love-songs of the south.

A still greater proportion seems to have been made by women. Almost all of them are happy. Marriage, which seemed to be so important a contribution to the happiness of the English girl, is only referred to once in the Northumbrian collection, and that is when a baby is already promising:

Bobbie Shaftoe's gone to sea;
Silver buckles on his knee;
He'll come back and marry me,
Bonny Bobbie Shaftoe!
Bobbie Shaftoe's gettin' a bairn
For to dangle on his airm,
On his airm and on his knee,
Bonnie Bobbie Shaftoe!

In the version of 'The Keys of Heaven' given in the *English County Songs* the girl would not go walking until the man had promised marriage; but in the Northumbrian version she is content with his promise of the keys of his heart, 'That your heart and my heart may never, never part.'

This freer attitude of the north country girl is corroborated by songs in other collections. The original words of 'Sleepy Maggie' were found 'unsuitable for publication,' and the poet Tannahill was commissioned to write an amended version. In its revised form it ended with the verse:

Aboon my breath I daurna speak
For fear I rouse your waukrife daddie;
Cauld's the breath upon my cheek,
O rise, O rise, my bonnie lady.
O, are ye sleepin' Maggie?
O, are ye sleepin' Maggie?
Let me in for loud the linn
Is roarin' o'er the warlock craigie.

and for a little while the stern immorality of editor and publisher triumphed. But natural morality was strong enough to take the song to a proper end. A friend of the poet asked him 'Why dinna ye let the drookit deevil in?' and Tannahill added the last verse:

She oped the door, she let him in;
He coost aside his dreepin' plaidie.
Blaw your warst, ye rain and win'
Since Maggie, now I'm in aside ye.
Now since you're waukin' Maggie,
Now since you're waukin' Maggie,
What care I for howlet's cry,
For boor-tree bank or warlock craigie?

Of all folk-singers the most famous was Burns. His genius reached from the saucy innocence of Northumbrian song, as for example:

Robin shure in hairst,
I shure wi' him;
Fient a heuk had I
Yet I stack by him.
Wasna Robin bauld,
Though I was a cotter,
Play'd me sic a trick,
And me the ells's dochter!

towards the passionate tenderness of Celtic love-song :

Oh, pale, pale now those rosy lips,
 I aft hae kiss'd sac fondly !
 And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance
 That dwelt on me sac kindly !
 And mouldering now in silent dust
 The heart that lo'ed me dearly—
 But still within my bosom's core
 Shall live my Highland Mary.

though it must be admitted that even Burns imagined nothing as beautiful as the best of the anonymous Celtic folk-songs. Burns had not the mystical quality of Celtic song; his heart was nearer to the realistic passion of Northumbria, though it was for Celtic tunes that he wrote many, if not most, of his songs—an inclination which he seems to have shared with other lowland folk-singers.¹

Exactly contrary to the emotional tendencies of Northumbrian folk in their love-songs, we find that in the Hebridean collection all the women's songs are tragic, and all but one of the men's songs happy. There is only one song which stands outside that statement, the humorous song about the Kelpie. A water-horse in the form of a man had married a Hebridean girl. When she discovered his real character she ran away from him, leaving him with the baby. The 'Water-Kelpie's Lullaby' is a grotesque alternation of lulling for the babe and coaxing to try and get the woman back again. Other Celtic songs need to be sung with a twinkle in the eye, but the Water-Kelpie is the only humorous love-song in the collection.

The love of the Hebridean is generally less hot but more intense than anything to be found in other parts of Britain. Perhaps the most passionate note is struck in 'The Love-Wandering':

¹ See the Introduction to *Songs of Scotland* in the Royal Edition.

The night we were upon the brae-top
 Mine were thy kisses and, O joy! thy frolic;
 In the fold of thy plaid I sat me down;
 Better thy speech than the world of gold.

Hast taken off me the East, off me the West,
 Hast taken off me the Moon, off me the Sun,
 Hast taken off me the heart in my bosom,
 And, O white love, almost off me my God!

The songs of the women are tragic because their men are mostly fisher-folk and in sea-peril. The songs of the men are happy because, in their peril, they sing of their women as havens of safety and peace.

In Mr Hughes' *Irish Country Songs* there are two love-songs of which the words are translated from the Gaelic. Both are men's songs. One is associated by the editor with the music of a reel; the other, 'My Love! O She's my Love!' is nearly as wildly beautiful as the Hebridean song just quoted.

Apart from musical collections there are many lovely Irish songs which must have been associated with music—for example, the famous 'Lament of Deirdre.' Translated by Ferguson it retains much of the feeling of folk-poetry:

The lions of the hill are gone,
 And I am left alone, alone.
 Dig the grave both wide and deep,
 For I am sick and fain would sleep.

The second couplet is to be found in English folk-songs: in 'Lord Rendal,' and 'Cold Blows the Wind.' And if the feudal flavour causes any hesitation in accepting such pieces as folk-songs, the hesitation will be freed when presently we come to Hebridean and Northumbrian songs of feudal origin. The hesitant may also be referred to Douglas Hyde's *Story of Early Gaelic Literature*, where are given examples of bardic song in process of modification by folk-singers.

FIGHTING-SONGS

No battle-songs are to be found in the *English County Songs*. There is one song of fighting at sea; but that celebrates, not the fighting spirit, but the personal heroism of a boy. Apart from that the only songs with martial reference are 'The Cheshire Man,' in which an Englishman avoids a fight with a Spaniard by making the foreigner dance; and 'The Painful Plough,' which exalts the task of the ploughman because among his various virtues is that of providing food for the soldier.

Four songs of fighting are to be found in Vaughan-Williams' *Songs from the Eastern Counties*, and again they are all of the sea. One is of a sailor in personal and victorious combat with a highwayman. Another is of the press-gang, and expresses the careless attitude of the average mercenary soldier. The other two are ballads of sea-fight in which the heroes are pirates.

There are no fighting-songs in Mocran's *Six Songs from Suffolk*, nor in Butterworth's *Eleven Songs from Sussex*, nor in Hammond's *Folk-Songs from Dorset*; but in the last named there is one song which refers to war—a girl's complaint because her lover is fighting oversea in High Germany.

Of course, there are plenty of British war-songs from 'The Song of Agincourt' to 'The British Grenadiers' and 'Keep the Home-fires Burning,' but such songs were not an expression of country-folk, and therefore do not concern us here. So far as the English folk-singer was concerned it is clear that he was not interested in fighting except at sea, where it could be considered in an ideal aspect; but even at sea he seems to have preferred that victory should go to those in revolt.

Dr Whittaker has naturally included some of the border ballads in his Northumbrian collection. Arising in feudal life, they must have been incorporated in the

songs of the people for over three hundred years, for Sir Philip Sidney wrote of them in his *Defence of Poesy*: 'I must confess mine own barbarousness. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style.'

There are four border ballads in *North Countrie Songs*; but there are only two real folk-songs of fighting. Both of the latter are sea-songs; both are made from a woman's point of view; and both express fear of the press-gang and hatred of war.

Lest this singular absence of folk fighting-songs in such a district should be due to accident, I have examined two other considerable collections containing folk-songs of Lowland Scotland.

In *Songs of the North* there is an anti-Jacobite song, 'The Women are a' Gane Wud,' expressing the inevitable disapproval of the peasant when his land has been raided. There is also 'Flowers of the Forest,' the Scottish soldiers' death-music, originally written to bewail the defeat of Flodden Field. The tune of the latter is folkish enough, but not the words. There is, in fact, not a single battle-song of folk-origin in this collection of ninety-six songs.

In *Scots Minstrelsie*, six volumes edited by Dr John Greig, there is no greater yield. 'Scots Wha Hae' has, of course, every element of a folk fighting-song but one: though inspired by, it was not intended to inspire, a fighting spirit. It came to Burns as a result of a walk over a desolate moor, and was written simply as a memorial of Bannockburn, as a token of nationalist pride.

There are real war-songs in this collection—for example:

Will ye gang to Sherramuir
Bauld John o' Inisture,
There to see the noble Mar
And his Hielan' Laddies?

and other songs to words of Scott, Burns, and Lady Nairne; and most of these were written to folk-tunes already known. But none of them represent the peasant's attitude to fighting. Of that the only specimen I have been able to get from records of Lowland Scotland is 'The Women are a' Gane Wud.'

The last named was an anti-Jacobite song. There are, however, plenty of Jacobite songs fastened to southern Scottish tunes. The vigour of the lowland music lends itself to the alliance. But the association is arbitrary and expresses rather the idea of making a people fight against their will by rousing their instinctive national emotions. Moreover, the Jacobite songs, like the Sherramuir song just quoted, are generally Highland songs; and in Celtic lands we find a very different folk attitude to fighting.

Whatever the rights of the Ossian controversy it is certain that Macpherson's poems were based upon a real popular poetic tradition. The clan and its chief are still effective forces in Celtic song. In the Hebridean songs the pugnacious person can find a congenial folk-music. Here are such fine things as 'The Ballad of McNeill of Barra,' 'The Sea Reiving Song,' 'The Reiving Ship,' and 'Reiving Rapture'—splendid pirate songs in which the pirates are not rogues and rebels as in English folk-music, but chieftains and heroes.

Such a hero is saluted in 'The Lord of the Isles':

Nalla vo hi! Like the rising sun;
 Nalla vo hi! Putting darkness on the stars;
 Nalla vo hi! My king's son in his armour,
 Rova ha! With his spotted, speckled shield;
 Nalla vo hi! White his spearhead gleaming;
 Nalla vo hi! Swift his arrows in their flight.

and here, in an 'Heroic Ossianic Chant,' we have him on his field of glory:

The king of Lochlinn his hardy hosts
 In this hour of need gathered,
 And with them came the mighty stalwarts
 Of nine kings from the northern shores.
 There were that wounded, fell,
 Or died on the field of battle,
 But never one was home returning
 Of all the Lochlinn men.

and Mrs Fraser recorded that 'as the old Benbecula singer chanted the last verses that tell of the glories of the Gael, his body became tense with excitement and his eyes glowed with the fire of racial memory.'

On the other side of the picture there are the proud laments of the women for their dead warriors and lovers. Here is a fragment of Grania's lament over the body of Diarmad:

Jerak son of Jerak, I am wife of thine.
 Thee would I cause nor pain nor sigh.
 To each brave cometh test of fire;
 Blacker fate to be left behind.

Shed no tear on his bier but sing
 That we to-night death-watch a king;
 Stately calm, open hand, our mien,
 Such was Jerak in his life, I ween.

and there are other such songs—'Alister Son of Coll,' and 'Death Keen for a Hero.' Further reference will be made to these with the Songs of Death.

Akin to the Hebridean fighting-songs is a fine 'Battle Hymn' in one of Stanford's books of *Irish Folk-Song*. The modern words by Mr Alfred Graves do not seem always to offer a reliable equivalent of folk-feeling,¹ but it may perhaps be presumed from his verses, as from those of Thomas Moore, that the Irishman has been as

¹ Flagrant evidence in support of the above suggestion is offered by Mr Graves himself. In the book of arrangements by Dr Charles Wood there is a 'Famine Song,' of which two verses are paraphrases of a Gaelic original, the third verse being Mr Graves' own. The additional verse expresses what a kind-hearted Christian might wish a starving peasantry to feel, but it entirely lacks the stark realism of the other verses.

ready to sing about a fight as he is popularly supposed to be ready to take part in one. If such words are any guide, the real difference between the Irish and the Hebridean songs is in the more realistic nature of the older poets, and the more romantic nature of modern Irish verse-writers. Cuchullain formed part of a less polite tradition.

Wales offers several fine fighting-songs, with a great bardic tradition behind them, while the piratical tendencies of the Celt may be traced right down to Brittany. A 'Hebridean Smuggler's Song' tells of a raid on the wine-casks of the Argylls, and reminds us of a Breton song in the *Barsaz Breiz* of Villemarqué. Referring to the Breton song we are informed that 'the Gauls whose wine is praised in this savage chant were the Franks, on whose vineyards and cellars Gregory of Tours describes the comparatively uncivilized Bretons as making regular autumnal raids.'

SONGS OF DEATH

Death is one of the major interests of the folk-singer. He is fond of a tragic, bloody, or pathetic ballad. When he sings of the end of a dislikeable person he has a supply of humour for the occasion.

In the *English County Songs* there are seven tragic ballads, two ballads with comic references to death, three possible elegies, and the children's song-game, 'Green Gravel.' The last is the remains of an ancient keen or wailing rite for mourners.¹

¹ That such a piece should have been preserved by children may seem unlikely to some people ; but I am the readier to accept Miss Broadwood's suggestion because of a game planned by my own children after seeing the rehearsals for a ballet in which the chief feature was a bier. That a song or dance means nothing definite to children is no argument against its perpetuation by them. They will learn songs with words which to them are unintelligible just as readily as nursery rhymes. That their song-words afterwards become unintelligible to us is one reason for the difficulty we have in tracing the origin of such things as 'Green Gravel.'

Of the tragic tales four refer to a lord, a knight, a squire and 'a noble gentleman.' The last marries the lowly heroine of the ballad. The other three are held up to opprobrium.

Lord Thomas tells of the behaviour of a lord who is involved in a love-triangle:

Lord Thomas having a sword in his hand,
It was both keen and small;
He took off the brown girl's hand
And threw it against the wall.

But he had some excuse, because the brown girl

had a knife in her hand,
It was both keen and sharp;
And 'twixt the long ribs and the short
She pricked fair Eleanor's heart.

There was no such excuse for 'The Outlandish Knight' who came from the north, wooed a maid, persuaded her to run away with him, taking

some of thy father's gold,
And some of thy mother's fee,
And two of the best nags out of the stable
Where they stand thirty and three.

No sooner did they reach the sea than he caused her to strip to the skin, because her clothes were 'too fine and gay to rot inside the sea'; but persuading him to turn away his eyes,

For it is not meet a ruffian should
A naked woman see,

she tumbled him into the waves. So he was disappointed of his avowed intention of drowning her as he had drowned six others before her.

To offset these ballads of a despised aristocracy we should perhaps recall the well-known 'Three Ravens'—a song going back to very early times when, perhaps, knights were still knightly—at any rate, to times when

folk-singers did not make disrespectful ballads about them. Its invention suggests feudal minstrelsy rather than folk-song.

She buried him before the prime;
She was dead herself ere evensong time.
God send every gentleman
Such hawks, such hounds, and such a leman.

Humour enters into 'King Arthur' from Lancashire, and 'Lazarus' from Middlesex. The former belongs to one of the northern English counties which have so far been excluded from our consideration of English folk-song. I include this song because there is a Northumbrian version of the same piece, and the slight difference between them is germane to our study. In both versions the country singer expresses his dislike of the craftsman by consigning the miller, the weaver, and the tailor to violent deaths, the last with a quick journey to hell in the arms of the devil himself. This feeling derived not merely from petty occupational jealousy, as we shall see a little later.

In 'Lazarus' what is humour for us was perhaps simple and sincere condemnation from the folk-singer. For the poor man he imagined

a place prepared in heaven
For to sit upon an angel's knee;

but for the rich man

a place prepared in hell
For to sit upon a serpent's knee.

However, there is no unconsciousness in the humour of another hell-and-devil song, 'The Devil and the Farmer'—a ballad with a wide popularity.¹ A farmer bargains with the devil to take his wife away; but when they get her to hell she makes so much trouble there that they are forced to let her go home again.

¹ *Folk-Song Journal*, II, p. 131; and Cecil Sharp's *Folk-Songs from the Appalachian Mountains*.

The three laments in the *County Song Book* are women's songs, alike in their simple sorrow, but proving striking differences of character in their makers.

'Bedlam City' is a song of crude emotion and vivid imagination:

Don't you hear the cannon's rattle?
Don't you hear the trumpet's sound?
Billy is dying in the midst of battle,
Dying of his bleeding wound.
Don't you see my Billy coming?
Don't you see in yonder cloud
Billy with the angels round him,
Billy in his bloody shroud?

'Sweet William' is a song of a somewhat self-centred miss who regrets the loss of her maidenhood, but to celebrate her lover's death:

I'll set me down and I'll write a song
I'll write it neat and I'll write it long,
And at every word I'll drop a tear,
And in every line I'll set my dear.

'Cold Blows the Wind' is on a higher level in both words and music. It contains a line which Ferguson used in his English version of 'Deirdre's Lament':

Go dig me a grave both wide and deep
As quickly as you may.
I will lie down in it and take one sleep
For a twelvemonth and a day.

It may not be without significance that these three laments come from the Celtic borderland. There are tender ballads of death found in other parts of England—e.g. 'Sweet William' and 'Fair Margaret' in Hammond's *Dorset Songs*—but I have not found a single other example of English elegiac folk-song. 'Bedlam City' may be the transported fragment of a city-ballad; but the fact that the other two real folk-laments were gathered near to Celtic country, the more beautiful containing a line of the 'Deirdre Song,' seems to make them less typical of the English folk-singer's art.

When we come to the Northumbrian death-songs the outstanding change is in the more heroic quality of the tragic ballads. The Whittaker collection has five tragedies, two humorous songs, and two elegies.

'The Outlandish Knight' turns up again, though naturally he is no longer a north country villain. 'Binnorie' gives us what is probably an older and purer version of 'The Barkshire Tragedy.' Both of those are typical expressions of the folk-spirit; but in the heroic ballads—'Chevy Chase,' 'The Battle of Otterburn,' and 'Hughie the Graeme'—we leave the peasant view of violent death, and revert to feudal ideas of death and glory.

The humorous songs bring back the people's outlook. Here again is King Arthur and his three cunning—sons no longer, for royalties are held in more respectful memory in these parts, but—servants. 'The Miller and his Sons' press home the ethics of the folk-singer even more emphatically. The Miller is about to die. He enquires which of his sons is most likely to succeed at the paternal job. The oldest promises to keep for himself one-quarter of the corn which the peasant brings for grinding. The second son will keep one-half. The youngest will return to the owner of the corn—the sack; whereon

Thou art the boy, the old man said,
Thou hast ight well learned thy trade;
The mill to thee I give, he cried,
And then turned up his toes and died.

'Maa Bonny Lad' is a song which has the realistic economy of the finest folk-art. A girl cheerfully enquires after her lover. The answer comes in the second of two short verses:

Yes, a'av seen yer bonny lad;
Upon the sea aa spied him.
His grave is green, but not wi' grass,
And thoult never lie beside him.

'Derwentwater's Appeal' is not a folk-song; but its existence is a sign that the people of the north have been steadily interested in what was the popular cause, and so have preserved one of the few specimens of anti-Jacobite song.

After those Whittaker songs Scottish collections add little essential to our knowledge of Northumbrian folk-song. This is probably accounted for in the statement by Dr Mackay:

'The Highlanders borrowed none of their melodies from the Lowlanders, but the Lowlanders borrowed so many from the Highlanders that perhaps as many as one-half of the Scottish tunes now current in the world had their origin among the Gael.'

If anything, that statement overestimates the number of real lowland tunes, unless the English parts of Northumbria are added to the Scottish Lowlands. And though it is the verses rather than the tunes we are considering, the borrowing of many tunes probably involved the borrowing of some poems also. We shall therefore have a clearer idea of the difference between Northumbrian and Celtic songs by a very cautious acceptance of Lowland Scottish songs.

Two characteristic numbers occur to me.

'The Twa Corbies' is a northern version of 'The Three Ravens.' In its Scottish form the dead man's mistress has found for herself a new man.

This 'Ae Nighte' is a fine example of a keen in developed literary form and showing ecclesiastical influence. That very development makes it of doubtful use for our study, for all its folkish phrases and refrains:

If eer thou gavest hosen and shoon
Every nighte and alle:
Sit thee down and put them on
And Christe receive thy saule.

If hosen and shoon thou gavest nane,
 Every nighte and alle;
 The winds sall pricke thee to the bare bane,
 And Christe receive thy saule.

If we are to understand the reality of music in the lives of the peasantry it must be a music that has been influenced as little as possible by the ideas of their religious teachers and class superiors.

Folk-elegy reaches its high watermark in Celtic Songs of Death. In the first two volumes of *Hebridean Song* there are fifteen to do with death. Eight of them are laments of women. Five are laments of men, but only two of these are folk-songs. The others are remains of the Ossianic tradition. Death without lament is the stuff of the 'Ballad of McNeill of Barra.' Finally, and in some ways most interesting of all, is an elaborate 'Death Croon.'

The outstanding quality of the women's laments is their quiet heroism. The 'Lay of Diarmad' has already been quoted; it is still used as a keening song by the wake-women of the isles. Here are some lines from 'Ailean Donn,' the lament of a woman for her lover who was drowned at sea:

O may God bedew thy soul
 With what I got of sweet caresses,
 With what I got of secret speech,
 With what I got of thy honey-kisses.
 My prayer to Thee, O King of the Throne!
 That I go not in earth nor in linen,
 That I go not in hole-ground nor in hidden place,
 But in the tangle where lies my Ailean.

A wide but less passionate and tender realm of emotion is found in the laments of the men, from the helpless misery of the 'Dunvegan Dirge,' to the fierce, savage remorse of Cuchullain by the corpse of the son he himself had slain.

The 'Death Croon' I was at first inclined to leave

out of consideration as too obviously the creation of Kenneth Macleod. But during the course of the studies which have gone to the making of this book it became borne in upon me that Macleod is as truly a folk-singer as any who have been anonymous, and his work could not be excluded merely on the ground that he is a contemporary. There was the case of the Hopi poet, Tawakwaptiwa, who made his butterfly dance-song of more truly traditional song-stuff than some of the anonymous Indian songs. There was the case of Bridget Geary who in 1904 made an Irish folk-song to the personal knowledge of Miss Broadwood. Finally, there was that remarkable scene described by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, where Kenneth Macleod by his knowledge and sympathy evoked from the old people songs which they had long forgotten. So in the case of this 'Death Croon'—even if some of it has no existence outside Macleod's memory, knowledge, and imagination—it must be accepted, I think, not as a thing he has created, nor even as a thing he has re-created, but as a real folk-song of a primitive type, evoked from his knowledge of the Celtic past and his complete sympathy with the lives of his forbears. The tetrachordal nature of the tune and its monotonous repetitions are an additional sign, if not of its existence in primitive times as in the exact form recorded by him, at least of its kinship with primitive song. Macleod says that the 'Death Croon' can be traced back to the days of Celtic Christianity (*i.e.* to an earlier period than the Christianization of England); that it passed into the care of a professional class of wailing women; and was taken over by the local midwife who, as recently as 1891, chanted such a ritual 'over a dying person in the Island of Eigg.' Apparently the 'Croon' carries back even to the ages of serpent-worship¹ when there

¹ *Songs of the Hebrides*, I, p. 105.

was a 'common belief that the dead come to life and revisit their old homes in the shape of serpents.' ¹

Here then it seems, we have a piece, which, however reshaped or developed by the poetical genius of Kenneth Macleod, belonged in its original form to a primitive and savage rite; was taken over by Christianity, transformed, and finally faded out.

FOLK-SONG AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Let us now try to understand the nature and cause of the varying expressions of these three different collections of British folk-song.

Despite the fact that women were the original folk-singers and contributed lullabies to the songs of most countries, no English lullabies seem to have been noteworthy at the time when collectors were scouring the country-side. There are nursery rhymes of a lulling nature, but with a hint of tragedy. And while mothers were apparently unused to singing their children to sleep, it was yet thought worth while to remember such a song as 'The Cruel Mother.' Northumbrian lullabies exist, but scarcely of a tender character, being chiefly concerned with the worries of working motherhood and, in a higher class of society, with the wickedness of fathers. But Celtic lullabies of the tenderest mood have been current down to our own time, with words indicating a full and forethoughtful maternity, irrespective of class; the illegitimate child is also the object of loving care, and mother-love is brought to bear on the forlornest babe of all, the stepchild.

We cannot believe that English peasant women have always loved their babes less than have the women of the Hebrides; but it is clear that at some fairly recent time English women of the peasant class ceased to sing lullabies.

¹ Fraser, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, 2nd ed., p. 73.

In so far as English lullabies have, in their time, been associated with the Christian religion and the worship of the Madonna, the Puritan period might have been responsible. We have the words of several religious lullabies of a literary character, and know that they ceased to be made after the fifteenth century. We know that under Puritan rule English folk-singers were chidden for singing working-songs. We know also that the Puritans had an objection to the worship of Mary as the mother of their Christ. 'She is set forth as a woman and a mother, and he as a child and infant, either in her armes, or in her hand, that so the common people might have occasion to imagine that looke, what power of overruling and commanding the mother hath over her little child, the same hath she over her son Jesus.' ¹ And we have at least one carol in which that very 'power of overruling and commanding' is expressed:

So Mary mild fetched home her child
And laid him across her knee;
With a handful of green withy twigs
She gave him slashes three.

(From 'The Bitter Withy,' a Gloucestershire carol collected by Cecil Sharp.)

But even if the peasantry were discouraged in the singing of religious lullabies, the Puritans could scarcely have objected to lullabies which had no religious associations; and it can scarcely be supposed that English mothers, of all mothers in the world, had no songs of that sort.

What is more, the religious lullabies came to an end before the Puritan movement, as such, could have been brought to bear on the activities of the people.

It seems something more than a coincidence that at that very time—during the fifteenth century—the

¹ *The Bospotted Jesuite*, London, 1641. Quoted by Alice Clark in *Working Life of Women in the 17th Century*.

economic conditions of such women as were in agricultural employment took a turn for the worse. Sheep-farming was being developed by the larger landholders, and enclosures of land, including parts of the commons, were being effected. In the fifteenth century women's labour, which had been the chief original factor in agriculture, had become rare, though such women as were so employed were even then receiving three times as much as they were paid four centuries later.¹ By the seventeenth century conditions of agricultural life had become such that 'few children of the wage-earning class reached maturity,'² and it is just that class which preserved the folk-songs which remained to be collected. We need not charge the Puritans with the loss of English lullabies. Women who were too poor to rear their infants are not likely to have had the heart to song-lull them, though they might well have had occasion to kill them and so provide the ballad-singers with a story of a Cruel Mother.

Odd little nursery rhymes lingered, chiefly on the lips of the children themselves—a little rhyme to presage disaster, or a snobbish little rhyme as a reminder that life is only going to be tolerable if father and mother are well up in the social scale, if Betty can contrive to be 'a lady,' or Johnny is willing to 'drum for the king.'

Compared even with the harassed spirit shown in the Northumbrian lullabies, these English rhymes are contemptible and tragic. The northern mother is hardly put to it, but she contrives to lull her babes; while the Hebridean mother evidently has the leisure and peace of mind which enables the musical spirit to express itself completely and beautifully.

In the elimination of English working-songs the Puritans may certainly have had a slight share. William

¹ Thorold Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, 15th ed., 1923, p. 540.

² Clark, book already cited, Chapter III, on 'Agriculture.'

Chappell quotes Miles Coverdale as lumping together 'the ballads of our courtiers, the whistling of our carters and ploughmen, and recommends young women at the distaff and spinning-wheel to forsake their hey nonny nonny hey trolly trolly and suchlike fantasies' and take to sober psalms.¹ All the same the anti-artistic influence of the Puritans has been altogether overrated. Their effective tyranny lasted only for a decade; and the memory of the peasant where his songs have been concerned has been quite capable of outlasting such a period. We have already heard of the Hebridean women drawing from the wells of their memories songs long unsung. Cecil Sharp has given striking instances of a similar faculty in the English peasantry.² To think that the centralized Puritan government of Cromwell could have made an end of the women's lullabies in their homes, or even the songs of the labourers in the fields, is palpably absurd. The real destroyers of English spinning-songs and mowing-songs were Arkwright's spinning-jenny which was invented in 1768, and the horse-drawn machines which displaced the general and choral use of the scythe and sickle just about the time indicated by Cecil Sharp as the age of rapid decline in English folk-music—about the middle of the nineteenth century.

The women had long ceased to sing their lullabies, because any quiet and tender expression of peasant motherhood had become a lie. There are no English spinning-songs extant because the mills of Lancashire made an end of spinning at home. Finally, the agricultural working-songs fell into disuse because there was no practical need for them. Even with the development of mechanical advantages some of the songs might have been remembered for the love the peasant had in them; but, as Cecil Sharp pointed out, leisure is needed for

¹ See the Introduction to *Popular Music of the Olden Time*.

² *English Folk-Song*, Chapter III.

the singing of folk-songs, and the only leisure that remained was an occasional hour at the village pub and periodical briberies, called harvest suppers, under the eye of the master. So the working-song degenerated from a means of human development to an expression of servility.

The peasant songs of revolt became tolerated ways of letting off the steam of discontent. The feeling for music as an accompaniment to action disappeared finally in these also, until in Cecil Sharp's time only a small proportion of the songs remained, and these only as memories of which the old people were ashamed because of the music-hall fashions which their young folk brought back from the towns.

Some of the songs which remained, such as 'King Arthur' and other Northumbrian songs, expressed a certain animosity towards the arts and crafts of town-life. This does not sound like a natural feeling of rural people. It was no mere weaver's hatred of tailor, reaper's hatred of miller. It represents what was a definite evil in the conditions of the change from a prevailing agricultural to a prevailing commercial life. The evil was stated by Roger Bacon. 'Of merchants and craftsmen there is no question, since fraud and deceit and guile reign beyond all measure in all their words and deeds.' The same kind of evil was stated of another people in an earlier age of the world: 'As a nail sticketh fast between the joints, so doth sin between buying and selling'; and it was upon this business of buying and selling that the post-agricultural age in England was centred.

The *English County Songs* express the conditions and emotions of a people in a late stage of agricultural decline, when their land had been taken from them, their native character sapped of its strength, their finest sons turned into rebels, and when the master-

as a brake on rebellion. Some feudal ideas lingered, but they were mostly of feudal dishonour—ideas which a ruling merchant-class was perhaps pleased to encourage. Sexual love became less a matter of passion than of prudence: marriage was the chief end of it, though even marriage to an agricultural labourer was less advantageous for a working girl than domestic service in town. Death is the end of a pathetic or ridiculous tale.

The *North Countrie Songs and Ballads* express the conditions and emotions of a hardier people, more capable of adapting themselves to changing conditions; where the men were taking to townwork and trade, and the women lived in the streets a more sociable life than rural conditions allowed; nevertheless, with memory of a time when life as a whole was better than the life they were actually enjoying. They put fearless eyes on it all, though sometimes a wry mouth. They idealized the feudal past when a man could keep his end up by means of a good fight. The feudal families had not yet entirely succumbed to the merchant-class, and still had a hope of winning back something of their power.

Yet if we nurse it watchfully
We may win gear enough still.

In spite of the idealization of feudal times the northern workers were themselves opposed to war. Love was still a reality and marriage only incidental. Death was a grim thing and faced realistically. Economic conditions had not reached the unbalance which results in revolt and servility.

The *Songs of the Hebrides* express the conditions and emotions of a comparatively primitive people engaged in agriculture, fishing, and handicraft. In a few details the degree of primitiveness touched that of the North American Indians. The clan and its land-

chief was nevertheless a more developed unit than the tribe and its warrior-chief. Clan relationships and clan conceptions of honour prevailed, but the greater part of religious superstition had been outgrown. The men lived steadily on land, finely and dangerously at sea. The women were largely and happily employed at home though they had discarded the heavier agricultural tasks. Children were regarded as of importance and treated with loving care. Sexual love was a matter of great passion; mating so natural a thing that marriage was not important enough to enter into their songs. Warfare belonged to a near historic past; so piracy and brigandage were sung with feelings neither of dishonour nor rebellion. Death was met bravely by the men, proudly by the women—seriously in all cases. There was no cynical or humorous feeling for death among people for whom it was an ever-present reality.

The Celtic folk-songs offer a definite bridge in the understanding of the reality of music as it has been developed from savage conditions to an advanced stage of agricultural life. With the Indian songs and the three groups of British folk-song before us, we can trace the functional development of music as it has been understood by primitive people, to its uses under medieval conditions, and to its final decay as a folk-art owing to the rise of industrial civilization under capitalist dominance. It remains to consider the tendency of religious music during that progress.

Religion permeated practically the whole body of American Indian song. In folk-song its influence seems gradually to have decreased almost to vanishing point.

In the two volumes of *Hebridean Song*, out of a hundred numbers only eight are devoted to religious subjects, though twenty-two others have passing reference to Christian or pagan ideas. Of the forty-

seven *North Countrie Songs* only one is avowedly religious, though six others bear witness to its influence. Of eighty-four *English County Songs* eight are religious, and four others are slightly connected with religion.

Here then we see that the most primitive British people, whose lives were spent partly on land and partly at sea, retained a small but appreciable feeling for direct religious expression in music. Northumbrian folk, whose peasant feeling had largely disappeared owing to the increase of industrial work, practically ignored religion as a subject for song. While the English, whose agricultural independence had been exchanged for a wage-earning position, were inclined to revert to musical expressions of religion.

However, in the songs in each group which refer only casually to religion we may expect to find, not a conscious expression of religious ideas, but such elements of superstition as have been retained sub-consciously; and here the tendency to outgrow religious ideas follows the historic course of the rise and fall of agricultural conditions. There are most of such references in the stage expressed by Celtic song, and fewest in the English agricultural decline.

Of such subconscious expressions Hebridean songs offer examples amounting approximately to one-fourth of the whole, the Northumbrian to one-seventh, and the English to one-twentieth.

Now if the subconscious and natural tendency is for an agricultural people gradually to discard their superstitions, why should the English, who had most completely outgrown them in subconscious association with song, show an increase upon the Northumbrian folk in the number of avowedly religious songs? Cecil Sharp pointed out that theology in English folk-songs was an intrusive thing. Let us examine the nature and extent of theological influence in the three sections.

Of the eight religious songs from the Hebrides all

but one are Christian, the eighth being the song of the pagan Druid when he found his island invaded by priests of the new sect. Three of the songs deal with Christian saints. 'Smoor the Firc' is the prayer of a devout believer. In the Christmas carol theology is reduced to a minimum, but is still Christian. The 'Christ-Child's Lullaby' is a lovely example of madonna-worship which, in the associated folk-tale, was turned to an exquisite and immediate human purpose. The 'Death Croon,' like the Carol, suggests an acquisition by the Christian Church of a previously existing pagan rite. Of the twenty-two Hebridean songs with passing religious reference more refer to paganism than to Christianity. The total number of religious songs as compared with those of the North American Indians shows that the Hebridean folk were much less under the influence of superstition than folk living under more primitive conditions; but, though Christianity had been so effectually introduced among them that all their consciously religious songs were Christian, yet such superstitions as remained in their subconsciousness belonged in the greater part to an earlier religion. Christianity was, in fact, an ecclesiastical imposition from without. Before its imposition superstition was apparently waning. Corroboration of that is found in Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's remark that a religious ceremony in connection with the waulking-songs was still remembered by the old people, but no longer practised.

For religious song Northumbrian people have apparently no conscious use at all. The single example given by Whittaker is a children's song, and children have preserved a mystical thing like 'Green Gravel' which means little or nothing to them. A song like that, for which adults have no longer any use, somehow contrives to linger on, without regard to its religious origin, merely because it appeals to children. The

children's carol in Whittaker's collection certainly cannot be accepted as a sign of the religious nature of Northumbria, when they actually perpetuate other carols without any sort of religious connection. The chief subconscious religious references in this group associate Christianity with fighting. The only other such expression shows that they have not quite got rid of a sense of the devil. Here then, in this section, where industrial life has made its deepest mark, the only musical remains of religion show it to be on its fair side a disappearing preserve of the children, and on its dark side a symptom of war and evil.

The extraordinary decrease in English subconscious religious expression would seem to suggest that the English peasant had outgrown his superstitions even more completely than the northman. But what about the curious increase in his consciously religious songs? That increase in the *English County Song Book* consists of three Christmas and two May-day carols, the 'Souling Song,' 'Lazarus,' and 'The Twelve Apostles.' Six of those are songs for feasts which Christianity took over from paganism. In 'Lazarus' the singer uses the orthodox faith as a weapon against the ruling class. 'The Twelve Apostles' he has largely changed into nonsense. 'Green Gravel' we have already considered.

When avowed religion lingers only in age-long traditions which are as pagan as they are Christian, and peters out in the song and play of children, when an important dogmatical song is turned into gibberish, is it not clear that the religious aspects of the songs mean little or nothing to the singer?

The American Indians, who were religious in almost all they sang, made their songs in an ignorance of natural facts. When they first began to think about agricultural problems, they regarded them as mysteries pertaining to women. They thought them 'magically

dependent for success on woman, and connected with child-bearing.' ¹ But it was just among the agricultural Indians that the real developments in song (as distinct from dance) took place. As they learned the natural effects of sun and rain, superstition began to disappear from their songs. They learned to plough, to aerate and manure the land, and more superstitions disappeared. Agriculture is a school of reality, and the songs of agricultural people are bound to become less and less religious.

The reappearance of superstition at a late stage in the decline of an agricultural people must signify either mental weakening, or, more likely, an imposition from without of an ecclesiastical nature. If the English folk-singer has been more religious than the Northumbrian it is because the conditions which brought him to servility also helped to enforce superstitions which, as his subconscious expressions in song show, he did not really believe.

Song melody, which evolved as a natural expression of personality and the real world, is least fitted of all the elements of music, for the expression of that original mystical sense which made men feel at one with each other and with life itself. For that the fullest expression had previously been found in rhythm and the dance.

¹ A quotation endorsed by Dr Jane Harrison in her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*.

PART III

THE REALITY OF MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

WE are apt to think of civilization as a necessarily good thing. Clearly the word indicates merely the sum of things—material and mental, good and bad—which develop when human activities are influenced chiefly by city life.

The nature of our civilization was largely decided towards the end of the Dark Ages. The efforts of Justinian and Charlemagne, being organized from above, depended chiefly upon themselves, and had no endurance. But in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the masses of the people in Western Europe began to take a corporate interest in their own welfare, and laid the foundations of the civilization which has only now reached its end.¹ Its rise occupied a comparatively short space of time; its fall has been spread over nearly a thousand years. All civilizations have risen rapidly and fallen slowly.²

Christian civilization was proclaimed most definitely by the building of great public halls, cathedrals. A study of those buildings reveals the principles which were acknowledged by the builders, and proves that there existed a general sense of communion among all men, irrespective of class.³ Without such communion

¹ *The Making of Europe*, by Christopher Dawson, p. 284.

² *The Revolutions of Civilization*, by Flinders Petrie.

³ *English Medieval Art*, by E. S. Prior; and the chapter on 'The Nature of Gothic,' from Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*.

it is clear that city life must become an evil rather than an advantageous thing.

Men congregate under the impulse which we call communal if we feel it ourselves, and herd-instinct if we feel superior to it. Of course, if we can do without the things which communal labour supplies, including all food and clothing which cannot be produced by our own isolated families, we are superior to it. In that case we may honourably settle down in our isolation to the enjoyment of such things as the non-communal spirit prefers; but if all men felt so, no city would have been built, no civilization developed.

The principles which governed the rise of Western European civilization issued from that mixture of common sense and idealist Christianity which has made a special appeal to the masses of Europe from that day until very recently. The Catholic Church, which sometimes stood for the people against the feudal lords, helped to organize the growing civilization. It called itself Christian, and indeed Christianity was the creative spirit which urged forward the realist and common sense of the people as a whole. The result was not exactly what Jesus would have wished; but his conceptions were as far removed from the forces of civilization as the ideas of a carpenter's son, living in a country-town, could well be. The problems of life arising from the interrelation of a number of large cities did not enter into his experience or imagination.

Nevertheless there was in the teaching of Jesus a root of communal feeling; and he extended to all human beings that idea of community which the Jews, like the American Indians, had conceived as merely tribal. For Jesus all men were brothers because children of the same father—a considerable imaginative step beyond the idea of a tribal Attius, a tribal Jehovah.

Fraternity seems to involve an approximate equality;

so Christian doctrine had been increasingly attractive to the common people of Europe from the break-up of the Roman Empire, when organized life had been once again thrown into the melting-pot. Because Christianity became the faith of a large body of the common people, and especially of those who wanted to live in decent communion with one another, those political geniuses who wished to ensure peace and stability in Europe found it useful to acknowledge the virtue of Christianity, and sometimes themselves to believe in it. Among such geniuses Constantine, Gregory, Charlemagne, and Hildebrand were outstanding. They varied in the extent in which they loved power for its own sake, and for themselves, and in the extent to which they were personally moved by Christian principles; but they all recognized that no civilization of lasting value could result unless they harnessed and guided the communal feeling which was rooted in the nature of the people.

One result of the recognition of the importance of the common people was to make them more important politically; and to make them aware of their importance. So, by the end of the eleventh century, a new and avowedly communal principle had become increasingly influential in the growth of the cities.

Of course, this growth of popular influence was not pleasing to the feudal lords, nor to the emerging *bourgeoisie*. At first the chief officials of the Catholic Church were closely related to the feudal class; but as time went on, and their interests were more closely bound up with the interests of the towns, the ecclesiastics became allied with the chief burghers. So eventually the Church was associated with the moneyed Guelphs against the aristocratic Ghibellines.

All of them—feudal lords, leading burghers, and clerical officials—paid lip-service to Christian ideals when they wanted to gain the support of the masses

of the people for their own particular interests; but to allow those ideals to move the common people to independent action was another matter. Accordingly, efforts were constantly made to assert the greater authority of the Emperor, Pope, and eventually of the merchant-financiers, against the increasing claims of the general run of townsfolk, and, particularly in Germany, against the consolidation of the peasantry.

Early in the twelfth century the people of the Roman commune, under the leadership of Arnold of Brescia, came to grips with the master-class in a conscious physical struggle to establish the growing civilization upon a politically scientific basis, with due acknowledgement of communal principles. The Catholic Church existed ostensibly to serve as a centre for all Christians of the known world. As is the way of institutions, it had failed to grow in intention and reality with the members of its own body. Clerics and officials lagged behind lay feeling in the rationalization of superstition, and the consequent restatement of dogma. So, when Arnold appeared, he was recognized as a true interpreter and leader by the Christian rank and file; while Bernard, who had proved himself a good official within the Catholic Church, joined with the Imperial power to suppress the popular movement.

The clerics did not hesitate to intimidate the people by working on any superstitions which had not been outgrown. The Pope separated Arnold from the Romans by placing their commune under an interdict and refusing the celebration of the Mass.

Had the people realized, as their sculptors and artists certainly realized fifty years later,¹ that the ecclesiastical interpretation of Jesus's last supper was a barbarous mystification, they would have laughed at the Pope. Had they realized that they had every right

¹ See pp. 108-9.

to interpret the Mass for themselves as a symbolical feast which declared their own equality, their common right to bread and wine, and their more intimate union because of that common right—that communion, that communism—they would have celebrated the Mass for themselves in the form of feasts in the churches, or, for the matter of that, in the streets. But they were still haunted by the magical elements of their religion. So they were betrayed into banishing the leader most worthy of their trust.

From that time the subversion of Christianity as a leading factor in civilization continued. The popular movement was not confined to Rome, and was not easily put down. The struggle went on for centuries, at one time in Italy, at other times in France, in Germany, in England. In fact the real story of the Middle Ages is the story of the losing fight made (in terms of Christian theology) for the communal organization of real life, against those burghers who reached power by the methods described by Roger Bacon,¹ and above all, against their own pretended leaders, the ecclesiastics, who served anti-Christ at their very altars. These warring classes used the same theological terminology. That is what makes the reality of the struggle hard to understand. The people used it with the idea of realizing the main principles of Christianity in their ordinary lives. The clerics, joining their material interests ever more closely with the interests of the bankers and burghers, used it with increasing obscurantism.

By the thirteenth century communal Christianity was undermined. In the fourteenth century the priestly caste did not even trouble to disguise their treachery.

As the people developed a sense of civic solidarity they developed also a new kind of music, a music

¹ See p. 80.

exactly suited to the expression of their communal aspirations.

The savage had expressed his dark religious sense of communism by means of rhythm. The peasant had expressed his growing sense of personality by means of melody. Its rhythmic basis preserved an original and ultimate feeling of the greater life of which personality remained a part, without which dividuality must grow vague and die. Later the growing sense of a more material and complicated form of communism in civilization was fitted in its turn with a perfectly expressive kind of music—polyphony, the welding into a euphonious whole of a multiplicity of melody.

There has been a conspiracy among orthodox musicians of recent years to ignore, and even to deny, the popular origin of polyphony.

Despite the fact that even primitive people have discovered the pleasure of singing in thirds and sixths with the melody—a pleasure which is known to certain African tribes—despite the knowledge we have of musically untrained people spontaneously breaking into part-singing, despite the statement of Thomas Morley that early descant was an extempore art, despite the evidence of Gerald of Wales, despite the existence of ‘Sumer is icumen in’ which contravenes the rules of the professional, orthodox music of its age—despite all such evidence it is insisted that polyphony was an art which arose in the clumsy experiments of orthodox science.¹

‘Where,’ ask our orthodox musicians, looking to paper instead of to flesh and blood for their ideas—‘Where are those early popular polyphonic songs? Singing in thirds and sixths is not polyphony. The improvised part-singing of untrained people is a dull monotonous affair. Morley must have been referring

¹ *The Oxford History of Music*, Vol. I.

to the extemporizations of people who had been trained in the science of music. Gerald of Wales—yes, rather troublesome statements, his! But we know that he shows a lack of technical musical knowledge. Therefore, when he says that certain people 'used to sing in as many parts as there were singers, his obvious exaggeration proves the unreliability of his evidence. As for "Sumer is icumen in," it's a riddle hard to rede, but it's clearly the work of a professional musician, and therefore of a monk.'

We can grant the professional perfection of the famous round. We can even admit the probability of the monkish composer, or, more likely, the monkish adapter or scribe; for many monks of the earlier Middle Ages were men of the people, and in sympathy with the popular developments of the age. But it is impossible to allow the real origin of the round to the crude musical science of the thirteenth-century Church. It is the likeliest thing in the world that, in spite of, perhaps because of, the dead end into which ecclesiastical music was pushed, a jolly musical monk would enjoy a lively and popular dance (even though it did suggest the pagan spring rite), and give it the permanence of ink on paper. He might even bring some professional skill to bear on it, though that is a matter of less certainty.

Some musicians, while allowing that a sort of popular polyphony existed, have been unwilling to admit the sense of euphony which made it a real art. They have imagined it must have been a mere hotch-potch of simultaneous tunes. So they have called it heterophony. But the fact remains that the most euphonious characteristics of that polyphony were dance-rhythm and concordant thirds and sixths. Those we find in 'Sumer is icumen in'; and they are the very musical features which were excluded from the ecclesiastical music of the thirteenth century.

‘But why,’ asks the incredulous professional musician — ‘why should that round stand alone? If it were a real example of a developed popular art there must have been other pieces nearly or quite as good.’

It is clearly possible that a monk, the only sort of thirteenth-century musician with the ability to notate music, might have written out just one popular piece for fun, and pursued such a perilous path no further. But the idea presents difficulties. However, recalling how princes and priests compacted to put down communal civilization, how they made it a crime to dance the carols, whitewashed the church walls where the artisan-painters had expressed free criticism of royalties and clerics, suppressed popular plays, and generally destroyed all that they could of popular culture, it seems not unlikely that such secular musical pieces as had been written down were also destroyed. Few such pieces are likely to have been recorded on paper. Faithful sons of the Church are not likely to have spent much time upon a popular polyphony which must have been a reproach to their own pedantry, as well as a stumbling-block to the pedantry of a later time.

The tuneless rhythm of the savage dance had been religious; but the tendency of rhythmic melody had been definitely secular. Such coarseness as is found in ‘Sumer is icumen in’ is reminiscent in more ways than one of lusty pagan dance-songs. If folk-music tended to become dissociated from religion, it seems clear that a more developed and realistic art would be still less expressive of superstitious ideas.

That the disappearance of popular polyphony was due to its suppression by the Church is the opinion expressed by Dr Hurry in his essay on ‘Sumer is icumen in.’¹ Miss Glyn attributes the fact to the extempore nature of the art.² Certain it is that when

¹ Second edition, 1914, pub. Novello & Company.

² *The Evolution of Musical Form*, by Margaret H. Glyn, Chapter XII.

we examine the earliest recorded medieval polyphony we find no such signs of skill, freedom and beauty as in the round. We find instead a crude attempt to combine the least sensuously beautiful sounds; and we find it even more wholly dedicated to religion than was the music of the American Indians.

The official music imposed upon the Church by Pope Gregory was incapable of rhythmic strength and precision. It could only become a part of a polyphonic web as an outstanding and foreign strand. The first monkish attempts to develop it by causing it to move in fourths and fifths had as close a relation to the musical instincts of mankind as a machine to a living organism. Indeed that early Church music was opposed to the songs of the people, not as an art, but as a science; and as a science it was known for three hundred years.

Yet Professor Wooldridge has, in the *Oxford History of Music*, proposed that ineffable monkish science as the basis of the real polyphony which was finally accepted by musicians with all the attributes of the popular art which the Church had condemned! Writing of the abandonment of the Old Organum and the first gingerly acceptance of a popular and secular style, he said: 'No method could well be more different from another than the method of the new system from that of the older one, and we must deplore the absence of the few links in the chain of description and example which are needed to make clear to us the intermediate phases of so remarkable a development.'

Notice that he places 'description' before 'example.' It is typical of the attitude which seeks evidence in parchment rather than in life. To search for the missing links between the medieval monkish science of music and the polyphony of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is as if to search for the missing links between

a crutch and a biped. Once musicians, secular and clerical, realized that the Organum-crutch was of no earthly use to people with legs of their own, they discarded the useless thing and took to a more natural method of progress, though their first movements were rickety as compared with the jolly dance of 'Sumer is icumen in.'

Between the crutch they threw away and the legs they began feebly to use there can have been no 'intermediate phases.' The Organum had to be scrapped because it was a purely theoretic experiment which hadn't come off. It was a contrivance of pedants who had been aware of the power of secular polyphony to raise men's hearts with a sense of rhythmic order and melodic freedom; and, at the same time, with a sense of a communal union more real than had been possible in the merely mystical union of primitive dance rhythms. Even though Church authority disliked the free and secular associations of the popular art, they wanted to be able to use its power for their own ends. Moreover, the musicians within the Church must have been to some extent aware of the dead-weight of plain-song which had been fastened upon them, as fetters on slaves, by the hierarchic tendencies of Gregory and his kind. They were employed upon an artificial science which refused to yield any kind of human advantage, while secular polyphony, under the growing inspiration of communal desire in a rapidly expanding world, had proved itself in forms of real beauty.

The clericals did not easily give up their science. Old Organum, in which official phrases of plain-song kept a bony skeleton of fourths dragging alongside, gave way to New Organum, in which a little increase was allowed in the length of chain, and the skeleton could jerk to and fro in fourths, fifths, and octaves; but the chained skeleton was not decently buried until

the Church gave in on almost every æsthetic detail, and accepted the secular manner of music, with the 'lascivious mode,' sensuous thirds and sixths, and even the dreaded element of rhythm.

As the pedants of those days feared the living art, so have the pedantic historians of our day shied at a natural explanation of that art. Professor Wooldridge said in the *Oxford History of Music*—and Professor Buck has allowed the statement to stand in the revised edition—that 'the origin of musical measure is obscure'!

That a musician with heart, arms, and legs of his own can be guilty of such a statement passes comprehension. Professor Buck himself knows that there is no obscurity in the origin of musical measure. On the contrary, he has congratulated the shades of those clerical reactionaries that they recognized how 'the first and greatest danger' [from secular music] 'lay in its rhythm.'¹ And in the same inverted little History we are told that 'early folk-song and dance-music were undoubtedly modal, since the ecclesiastical system was the only model available to the pioneer';¹ which seems to suggest that the secular art had been learned from the clerics instead of the exact contrary.

We have already learned from Cecil Sharp, who went to life and not to documents for his data, that clerical influence in folk-music is a late development, a sign of its degeneration. Modality in folk-music has existed as a free expression, and had nothing to do with the feeble attempts of the Church to check its popular and sportive growth by reverting to outworn forms—forms which the people, in their will to the expression of bubbling life, used and discarded according to their musical need.

The first elements of popular secular polyphony to

¹ *A History of Music*, by Percy A. Buck, Professor of Music at London University. Benn's Sixpenny Series.

be admitted into ecclesiastical music were a limited melodic freedom and the consonance of thirds and sixths. The fullest possible freedom was not allowed until the time of the Reformation, when, with the associated forces of musical instruments, an unshackled rhythm re-entered the holy places. Then it became possible for the greatest of all composers to cause Christ to rise from the dead to the dance of a Polonaise.¹ And, recalling the banned carols and such a literary offshoot as 'The Dance of Jesus,' we understand why a great artist found that his attitude to the deep things of life was near to the instinctive attitude of the common people.

But the climax of musical culture in our civilization was reached after its popular, secular, rationalist tendencies had been completely suppressed in action, and made suspect in all forms of expression including the arts. I have outlined elsewhere² the manner of that suppression, and its effect upon artists in offering them the alternative of service with the master-class, or neglect and perhaps starvation. Here we have to follow up the development of music in certain of its aspects from the time that Christian civilization was securely established upon a non-Christian basis.

As the Mass was the central rite of the Catholic Church it will be of advantage to concentrate on its course in relation to our study; for I propose, as nearly as possible, to follow the same plan as in the previous chapters. Religious music will be confined to settings of the Mass; Lullabies will develop in such expressions of mother-love as Magnificats and Stabat Maters; Love-songs will be found in madrigals, lute-songs, and operas; working and fighting-music will be found in forms of full-blown operas and cantatas; while for musical expressions of Death there are Passions, Requiems, and other pieces. I do not

¹ See p. 116.

² Bach, Chapter II, see fn., p. 114.

propose separately to discuss music made for mere amusement. Its mass-production and short life tells its own tale. The arts of savage life were invented to fill time. The amusements of civilized life have been invented chiefly to kill time.

RELIGIOUS MUSIC: THE MASS

Savages who have grown up in the habit of eating their gods may perhaps be excused the less divine meal of human flesh. As a matter of fact, there is evidence to show that cannibalism has been associated with the devourous appetite.¹

Ceremonial cannibalism was a rite of the Nahua religion 'which enjoined slaughter of slaves or captives in the name of a deity, and their consumption with the idea that the consumers attained unity with that deity in the flesh.'¹

A less repulsive form of human sacrifice occurred when the victim was not eaten, but buried with the idea that crops might benefit. In that case the victim sometimes represented a god, whether or not any form of sacramental meal took place.²

Another step upward happened when a beast was sacrificed instead of a human, perhaps with some such magical transference of spirit as is practised in Voodoo rites.³

Referring to the Roman spring festival of Attis, Fraser says it 'included a sacramental meal and a baptism of blood. In the sacrament the novice became a partaker of the mysteries by eating out of a drum and drinking out of a cymbal, two instruments of music which figured prominently in the thrilling orchestra of Attis. The fast which accompanied the

¹ *Myths of Mexico and Peru*, by Lewis Spence, p. 45.

² Fraser, *Attis, Adonis, Osiris*, 2nd ed., p. 338.

³ See p. 29.

mourning for the dead god may perhaps have been designed to prepare the body of the communicant for the reception of the blessed sacrament.' ¹

Then there was the enormous advance in human mentality signified by the fact that men thought of their god as one who takes no delight in blood-sacrifices, burnt foods, and so on. Such an advance may be evidenced in the Indian ceremony associated with the song quoted on p. 11. That ceremony was still religious in its nature; but its mystical importance was balanced by its material, human, communal aspect. It was no longer a question of bribing or appeasing a supernatural being; it was a question of recognizing that the fruits of the earth came in due time, and should be enjoyed by men in comradeship, with gratitude to the mysterious power which seemed to have ordered it so.

The Jewish Passover is a ceremony of kindred kind. It also was once a nature-feast; ² and it was in the Passover that the Mass with its nature-feast reminders, originated.

Exactly what Jesus meant at his last Passover Supper by his references to the bread and wine as his body and blood is not our primary concern here. But it is our concern to understand the surprising differences in the musical interpretation of the Christian ceremonial which have issued from that saying. The masses of Palestrina, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner's 'Parsifal' were not composed in the same religious faith; and it is for us to try and appreciate what their differences signify. We must therefore learn what the Christians themselves have had to say about the ceremony.

At one extreme of interpretation there is the official view of the Catholic Church that the Mass is in fact

¹ Book cited, pp. 228-9.

² *Judaism*, by Israel Abrahams, p. 52.

a sacrifice, with the real body and blood of Christ mystically consumed by his worshippers. There is a middle, Protestant view that Jesus was instituting a simple memorial service. At the other extreme of interpretation there is Tolstoy's rationalist explanation that the words of Jesus were a typically gentle method of revealing to Judas the nature of his intended treachery without exposing him to the other disciples.¹

People nowadays are not sufficiently interested in Christianity to be interested in Tolstoy's explanation. It rationalizes a detail which no longer bothers rationalists. But it is important for us because it seems exactly to state the view that was held at that period of medieval growth when the communal principle was most in evidence. We will presently revert to it.

The Protestant view is the one which is most easily adaptable to changing opinion, but it matters least here as it has produced no great Mass-music.

It is for the Catholic sacrificial interpretation that most of the great musical masses have been composed. So here we find, during the advance of civilization, a large number of musicians devoting their skill and imagination to a rite which throws humanity back towards a savage conception of mystery.

Shaw said that 'the conversion of a savage to Christianity was the conversion of Christianity to savagery'; but in the matter of the Mass it would seem that the most prevalent and enduring conception is already savage.

I do not know if the Passover is still celebrated anywhere with the bloody rites prescribed in Leviticus; but it is clear that the parallel sacrament of the North American Indians already eliminated all association of sacrifice. That the Christian Mass should thus revert

¹ Tolstoy, *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated*, Eng. trans. by Leo Weiner, 1904, pp. 251 *seq.*

to so low a conception of religious mystery can only be regarded as a sign of the nature of Christian civilization itself.

There was some excuse for Christians in their earlier conflicts with popular paganism. 'The coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals,' says Sir J. G. Fraser, 'are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the Church in its hour of triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals.' But this particular compromise was made when Christianity was still but a sect; when it had scarcely become a Church; when any likelihood of such short periods of triumph as it eventually won in Europe cannot have entered into the imagination of its leaders.

Such references as are made to the breaking of bread in the Acts of the Apostles are generally assumed to belong to early commemorations of the Last Supper. Even that sometimes seems an effort of the imagination; but if it is correct the rite was a simple memorial, with no hint of sacrificial mystery. The Pauline letters, however, refer to it as a celebration and a sacrifice; and Mr Leigh Bennett, in his *Handbook of the Early Christian Fathers*, says 'it seems clear that they all believed that the elements were the body and blood, and that the Eucharist was an offering or sacrifice.'

Recalling the fact that primitive religious ceremonial was frequently followed by a communal feast, it is worth bearing in mind that there was a similar association in some of the earlier celebrations of the Mass. 'If the Bishop presided after his appointment both at the Lord's Supper itself, and in the agape or feast which followed it, the elders would assist, not merely in maintaining order, but would officiate throughout the ceremony,'¹ a statement which not only implies

¹ Milman, *History of Christianity*, revised ed., 1863, II, p. 28.

the communal nature of the feast, but also shows that the priests were not the sole mediators between the Christians and their gods. There was not apparently that sharp division between the clerks and the laymen which now screens the fact that the clergy were the civil service of Christendom, and obtained their holy orders from the people which constituted the Church.

The same Anglican authority described the change from the Mass as a memorial service to its baser form of sacrificial rite. 'Christianity disdained that its God and its Redeemer should be less magnificently honoured than the dæmons of paganism. In the service it delighted to transfer and to breathe, as it were, a sublimer sense into the common appellations of the pagan worship, whether from the ordinary ceremonial, or the more secret mysteries. The Church became a temple; the table of the communion an altar; the celebration of the Eucharist the appalling or the unbloody sacrifice. . . . The incense, the garlands, the lamps, all were gradually adopted by zealous rivalry, or seized as the lawful spoils of vanquished paganism, and consecrated to the service of Christ. . . . Its preparatory ceremonial abstinence, personal purity, ablution, secrecy, closely resembled that of the pagan mysteries (perhaps each may have contributed to the other); so the theologic dialect of Christianity spoke the same language.' ¹

However real the communal nature of the earlier commemorative rite may have been, it is clear that the reaction to savagery would involve an increased importance for the holy men, the clerks in holy orders. Secret mysteries, real or vicarious sacrifices, incomprehensible tongues—'theologic dialects,' Dean Milman called them—these carry us back to the kind of religious ceremony in which the holy man is a necessary medium between the mystical powers and a helpless congregation.

¹ Milman, III, pp. 308-9.

For that kind of ceremony in the Christian Church Gregory insisted on the kind of music now called Plain-song. It is entirely suited to the occasion. Fraser says 'every faith has its appropriate music, and the difference between the creeds might almost be expressed in musical notation.' A kind of religion, therefore, which is entirely authoritative needs just such a music as the Gregorian which is the very voice of authority.

Melody was the element which emerged in the expression of human personality. Its nature gave expression to the dividuality of the singer, though its association with rhythm maintained the original musical and mental links which made men feel their personalities as belonging to their tribe and to the mystical source of life. So melody without rhythm is the perfect musical voice of a dividuality which has *no* communal links with mankind; though, having the mystic associations of primitive music, it still has power to work on human superstition. Unrhythmic melody is in fact the Voice of God.

Some plain-song enthusiasts expatiate on the 'wonderful rhythm of plain-song.' Let us grant without demur that it has the movement of good prose. But we are discussing music, and to imagine that our art, which has grown from a rhythmic root, can be cut away from that root without loss of its natural vitality is ridiculous.

Whenever in great musical art an approach has been made to such prose-rhythm, as in the recitative of Bach and the declamation of Wagner, its musical function has been to relieve the strain of concentrated listening; its dramatic function to carry on a story or sequence of ideas during moments when the words do not rise to the emotional level where rhythm and rhythmic-melody are naturally evoked.

Plain-song has a real dramatic function, and is perfectly fitted for that function; but it has no musical

function, because it stands alone, and has no deep concentration to relieve. A melodic but rhythmless art is the perfect expression of an authority which is separated from the will of mankind.

The Gregorian Mass reverts the more significantly to savage type in that its neumae correspond with the meaningless vocables of the most primitive religious songs. Other music has been made for the Mass, from the cloistral loveliness of Palestrina's clever works to the passionate reproach of Beethoven's Mass in D; but Catholic opinion declares that the Gregorian is the most fitting of all music. That is an effective criticism of the rite itself.

An evolving god as postulated by Butler and Shaw is obviously a finer tribute to the religious spirit than the petrified god of the Catholic Church. Plain-song is the petrification of music. For music to continue in vitality it cannot pause at any particular moment of its growth. It must be free enough for its form to be modified according to the changes in the human need for musical expression. The general outlines of folk-music continued for generations with the most amazing perdurance; but two exactly similar versions of the same song have, I believe, never been noted. Some of the best folk-singers modified their tunes to suit subtleties of mood and rhythm in different verses of the same song. To realize the spiritual futility of a tune which was never so modified enables us to understand what is meant by the papal insistence on Gregorian.

Plain-song fits superstitious ceremonial magnificence the more adequately because it has been used to express the anti-communal spirit which underlay the ecclesiastical distortions of the teaching of Jesus. Gregory himself was a good man in his way, reaching out in a kind manner towards the poor of this world. He had the spirit of charity which the poor hate so

much. He had no idea, however, of changing, or even modifying, the pretentious pontifical organization which he governed. On the contrary he made the most of it, and gave to it its most fitting music.

However, in spite of all pontifical authority, the Church could not withstand the natural human instinct for living song. Of all man's activities, the arts, and especially music, impress the untutored mind as a form of mystical revelation. For a Church professing special access to religious mystery to maintain a form of æsthetic expression which has been outgrown by average human beings is to give an impression that its mystical prerogatives have passed into other hands. So Church musicians tried the effect of another compromise.

Well aware of the power and beauty of secular polyphony, an effort was eventually made to associate it with the Gregorian tones. We have seen that the effort failed, and the Church was forced gradually to accept the secular art in every detail. First Gregorian themes were woven about with polyphonic figuration, much as the words of a missal would be framed with decorative devices, or, later on, a picture of the holy family set about with cherubs. The pressure of secular popular feeling continuing, even popular songs were used as central motives, *canti fermi*.

Associated with the musical pressure from without there was also a rationalist pressure which for a time affected even the form of the Mass itself. Dramatic episodes were introduced into the performance of the ceremony. The meaningless neumae were transformed into significant phrases called tropes. The tropes became dialogues and the dialogues dramas, all within the framework of the Mass.¹ And this lay pressure synchronized with the new communal conception of Christianity.

¹ Chambers, *Medieval Drama*, Vol. II, chapter on 'Liturgical Plays.'

When lay pressure reached such a degree that the demand was made for the performance of the Mass in the vulgar tongue, the dramatic features, being performed in Latin, may have served as a means of staving off the tendency which must have led to the rationalization of the Mass itself. A sacrifice which is not a mystery is clearly a superstition. Divest the Mass of the mystery caused by its 'theologic dialect,' and the priestly interpretation must give way before the natural sense of the free human mind, especially when that mind is very much concerned with problems of human welfare. Rather than allow such rationalization, which would have made a quick end of priestly pretensions to special mystical powers, it was found better to tolerate dramatic developments in the dead language. After all, such dramatic episodes were not so unlike the dramatic moments sculpted on the churches themselves. Performances of such dramas, kept within the charge of the Church, would ensure a certain limit to the free-thought.

But the pressure continued. The ferment of polyphony freed from the connection with dogmatic forms of Gregorian indicated a good deal of fresh feeling about mystical things. Such feeling is the sign and stimulant of fresh thought. The growth of the popular and secular spirit of the communes had its inevitable repercussions upon religion, and the central religious ceremony.

The question was, Should the life of the towns, with its quickening of spirit for all, including the working-class, remain chained to a savage sacrificial conception of religion, or should men perform their chief Christian ceremonial with an increased evidence of its communal aspects? Was the Mass to remain a magical rite associated with the drinking of blood, or should it be transformed to express a more fatherly and brotherly conception of God and

Jesus, and the less blood-thirsty desires of their worshippers?

We have some evidence that about this time a general interpretation of the Last Supper prevailed which almost exactly coincides with the interpretation proposed by Tolstoy. Jesus had learned that Judas had been consorting with those who sought his downfall, and understood from Judas's own behaviour what his intentions were. So he declared at the Last Supper that he was about to be betrayed by one of his own followers; and announced, in the allegorical manner favoured by him, that under such circumstances the eating of the bread before them was equivalent to the eating of his own flesh, the drinking of the wine like the drinking of his very blood. His own gentle and quixotic nature would not allow him to accuse Judas before the other disciples; but by facing the guilty one with the probable results of his treachery he gave him a late chance of repentance.

A pulpit relief in the Duomo of Volterra expresses just such an interpretation of the Last Supper. Judas hides himself with the tablecloth as he takes from Jesus the sop, the giving of which would have made it clear which was the traitor. That piece of sculpture dates from 1200. Late in the thirteenth century the same interpretation prevailed. A similar scene is to be found in an English Psalter in the British Museum, Judas stooping below the level of the table that the quiet but tell-tale action of Jesus may not be seen by the others. In Giotto's Last Supper from the Arena Chapel, Padua, Judas no longer hides from the others; but there is a feeling of surreptitious movement as Jesus chooses to dip in the dish at the same moment as the traitor.

The fourteenth century found the communal cause lost, and with it the tendency to the rationalization of superstition. A tradition persisted in pictures of the

Last Supper that Judas's position, originally planned to enable him to take the bread from Jesus unseen, should be on the opposite side of the table. So he is placed in the pictures of Castagno, Ghirlandjo, and Rosselli. On the other hand, Fra Angelico, himself a monk, accepted the sacrificial interpretation of the Church, and painted the Last Supper as an ecclesiastical rite, with Christ as the officiating priest.

Leonardo, with his rationalist mind, saw in the situation neither a commemoration nor a sacrifice, but a great dramatic moment. His Judas is no villain, but a strong Machiavellian figure with the money-bag. The popular cause had been lost, and meant nothing to Leonardo. He imagined neither a sacrificial mystery nor a symbolic tragedy; but he took full objective advantage of an opportunity to characterize men as he knew them in an evil age. His Jesus is the weak leader who has failed, and filled his followers with confusion. Only one of them sits secure in his seat—he who holds the cash.

Great artists were no longer concerned with the communal impulse of Christianity, except in remote, indirect, and mystical symbols. If artists were to earn their living they must paint, write, and sing in ways approved by the ruling class. The ruling class was now consolidated with the Church as its ally or servant, as luck allowed, or cunning could scheme.¹

Popular feeling was now driven underground, and had to be content with a merely symbolic art while it regathered its forces for revolt. But the Mass remained the central rite, not only of the official Church, but of the people. Through it the popular will could express Christian doctrine in communal terms; and its interpretation was the focal point of the Reformation.

Protestantism summarized for a time the feelings of

¹ For reproductions of the above pictures see 'The Last Supper,' twelve representations, published by the Medici Press.

the common people, and their own music was used in religious services. The German *Volkslied* became the Lutheran hymn. An outstanding English church-composer of Tudor times adopted a style 'curiously akin in turn of phrase to the style of the contemporary folk-songs.'¹

Against that powerful and, at first, popular movement the Roman Church made its stand. It did not budge in its sacrificial interpretation of the Mass. Its answer was an effort to set its house in order, with the help of the newly formed Company of Jesus. 'The secret of the Jesuits, hitherto unknown in community-life, was the combination of self-abnegation with free development of individuality.'² That was to narrow the great problem of civic communism to such dimensions as could more hopefully be controlled; to achieve within monastic limits the problems which had failed of solution throughout Western Europe.

The Jesuitry of the counter-revolution is perfectly expressed in the music of Palestrina. The elements of secular polyphony were completely absorbed by the Church in the music of Palestrina, and made tame in the stillness of the cloister. The 'free development of individuality,' within limits permitted by the Church, is expressed by the easy movement of each gentle melodic phrase. The 'self-abnegation' is shown in the polyphonic principle of mutual accommodation between the various parts; but it is easy to be accommodating when, as in Palestrina, each part asks so little. The 'self-abnegation' is shown still more obviously in its accommodation to authority—in the spirit of placidity which seeks no emotional experience outside that permitted by the canon. The sensuous loveliness of secular polyphony is accepted, in a chaste form, in the

¹ Ernest Walker, *History of Music in England*, pp. 41-2, relative to the works of Tye.

² Bell, *Short History of the Papacy*, p. 324.

euphonious management of the voices. So here in cloistral echo we find the Church committed to a music which was lately anathema, with its voluptuous consonances, and even the wanton major scale.

Rhythm, that device of the devil, is a harder demon to exorcize. But as Palestrina found that he couldn't do without it, he had to exercise a little Jesuit cunning, and maintain a rhythmic structure by means of dissonances, which had not so far been brought under ban.¹

The problems set up in music by a recognition of the expressive value of the dissonance offer counterparts of those less governable problems set up by civilization itself. Palestrina limits himself to a simple and rhythmic use of dissonances, and resolves his limited problems with ease, as the Jesuits limited their problems by a recognition of the papacy as the sole arbiter of truth.

But the simplest dissonance involves ideas which extend beyond a cloistered art. Limited though Palestrina's music is, it passed beyond the service for which it was intended. Admitting the sensuous beauty of his thirds and sixths, admitting his cautious dissonance, admitting the 'development of individuality' within the boundaries of gentle contentment, and admitting his right to the back-stairs of rhythm, more intensely musical minds, to say nothing of more wilful and secular minds, were unable to tolerate the restrictions to which his art was submitted. So it was that secular art continued to move forward while clerical music lagged behind.

Indeed such a forward movement is to be found in the secular pieces of Palestrina himself. His madrigals are much more alive and expressive than his sedate Church music.

¹ The rhythmic use of dissonance in the work of Palestrina has been discussed at length by Dr Karl Jeppesen in his exhaustive study, *The Style of Palestrina and the Dissonance*.

To-day, when secular music itself has reacted towards savagery, there is also an ecclesiastical tendency to revert to the most primitive form of Church music. In a *Grammar of Plain-song* by a Benedictine of Stanbrook, published in 1926, we find the following:

‘Plain-chant is all in unison, hence it can have none of those dissonances on which modern music depends for many of its finest effects. . . . Of Palestrina nothing need now be said. His work has been often and ably treated, and the growing interest in his compositions is a happy sign. High, however, as is its character, Palestrinian music is not the original song of the Church; unless we agree that the honour of furnishing a form of chant worthy of celebrating divine mysteries, and capable of raising the heart to God, was reserved for the sixteenth century.’

It is not easy for worldly people like myself to sympathize with a point of view which falls back on a primitive, arbitrary, and comparatively feeble means of expression, when fully developed music is available. But the instinct of the Benedictine is right enough. If mankind is to decline in mentality to a state in which superstition and sacrifice seem good things, the arts must also decline. If the religious conceptions of the sixth century are to be fastened on the twentieth, it is entirely fitting that the musical expression of the sixth century should also be used. As Fraser said, every faith has its appropriate music. The modern revival of plain-song is no mere reversion to the roots of our art, but a degrading reaction which is characteristic of our time in almost every sphere of thought and activity.

As inevitably as the sixteenth century led to the seventeenth did the music of Palestrina lead to the music of Bach. Being aware of the communal nature of polyphony, the human mind must sicken of the sweet and cloying vision of Palestrina, and demand a music for the harshness of reality, and a deeper sense of life's mysteries than the childish perceptions of

ecclesiastics have been able to admit. Being aware that the music of Palestrina is, for all its loveliness, a cloistered art, we have to choose between the cloister itself and a merely antiquarian appreciation of that art. Passing on to the more vital polyphony of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner, we pass from the communism of the Jesuit to the communism of a greater world, where emotion goes deeper, thought is freer, and men grow to doubt the ways of the gods with their carnal feasts and blood-cups.

Though the Counter-revolution had been strong enough to check the advance of the half-hearted Protestants, it was less effective in maintaining a superstitious spirit against the growing secular and national tendencies of the Renaissance. The Catholic Church, which had taken a leading part in the betrayal of the communal principles of Christianity, was now treated as it deserved: discarded by princes who were equally indifferent to the popular origins of Protestantism, or kept in tow by princes to whom it could still be useful. Those who, like the Tudors, used the revolutionary waves of Protestantism for their own ends, soon showed that they were opposed both to Protestantism and to revolution. Those who, like the monarchs of France and Spain, continued in the Catholic faith, made it clear that royalism was now of more importance than religion. It became clear that everywhere, the ruling classes, except for a few pathological cases, were indifferent to religion. Its political aspect was still valued, in that masses of the uneducated might be controlled through their superstitions.

From that time forward, great creative artists, generally born from the lower classes, discovered their real powers in the degree in which they were able to interpret Christian doctrine in its original communal significance; or, by shaking free from its symbols, contribute to a fresh development of secular and

realist art. Artists of the second rank, avoiding both religion and reality, fell into the baroque affections which regularly beset an art which has its existence in the service of pleasure-seekers.

It was not where orthodox religion governed the ways of music, nor where music was regarded as a luxury of leisured life, that its most wonderful developments took place; but where it was most closely associated with the political will of the common people and their need for emotional expression.

The music 'alla Palestrina' of Italy and Spain ran in an ever-narrowing and superficial stream. The music made—chiefly in Italy, France, and England—for the amusement of such members of the ruling class as retained sufficient intellectual capacity to enjoy it, was but a wanton echo, and sometimes a disgraceful parody, of life. It was again the will of the common people which impelled the only rising forms of musical art. It was the German folk-song which, used in connection with the emotions of the Protestant revolt, provided the nucleus around which a greater music was presently to be developed.

Exactly how Bach came to write his B minor Mass, a work equally unsuited for Catholicism and Protestantism, I have shown elsewhere.¹ Here it is necessary only to point out that the last great work of the greatest master of music shows that he had outgrown his religion.

Professional musicians in the service of the Christian Church had been aware of the deep and vital nature of the emotional world expressed with increasing fulness up to the time of Palestrina. But when musicians were required to check their inspiration because it

¹ Bach, in the *Masters of Music* series, edited by Sir Landon Ronald. Though the thesis of that book has been much criticized, it has been in no way refuted, either by a denial of the facts assembled in it, or by any reasoned attempt to disprove the interpretation of those facts.

moved beyond the imaginative understanding of clerical authority, they were faced with a barrier which dammed the normal flow of musical expression.

The Church had approved the neumae of the Gregorian Mass. That emphasized the mystical nature of the ceremony. What could not be allowed was the flowering of music itself, because it attracted the minds of the listeners away from the ceremony, and led to a more delightful wonder in the art. The tendency of music to flower on its own account, despite ecclesiastical and theoretic prohibitions, was significant of a natural human power, and a natural human need, which all real musicians would have to take into account. For a composer to accept limitations, whether religious or pedantic, unless they accorded with his own instinct, would be to deny the authority of his inspiration. And inspiration did not drop from the clouds; it issued from the desires and aspirations of human beings, living physical lives upon the earth.

Bach's Passions and Cantatas express something of a religious spirit, but still more of the rational and realist spirit which informed Protestantism so long as it was an honest revolt. The rite of the Mass moved Bach so little that whenever he made music for it his creative faculty deserted him, and he was obliged to use themes and movements previously composed for other words.

Of course, once he had decided which old piece he would use, it was possible for him to recompose it. In that case, where would he look for the informing power? Not to the rite: it is obvious that in the Mass in B minor he ignored the ceremonial and all that it implied. Only in the opening phrase of the Credo is there any sign that he was aware of the religious tradition, and even there his choral setting of the priest's leading sentence shows that he had cut the old leading strings. At the same time his use of that

phrase of plain-song seems to declare a sense of union between the deeper art he was engaged in revealing and the great body of Christians, even those within the Catholic Church. The dance form of the *Et Resurrexit* seems to have been chosen as a compliment to the Polish King, to whom, and not to God, the work was dedicated. But that servile dedication covered a free art, being the culminating act of a life dedicated to the popular cause as Bach understood it.

The inspiration of the B minor Mass came from that cause, through its greatest master of music—the master who knew how to balance most perfectly the various elements of his art. In Bach the formative principles of music first arrived at co-ordinated expression. Rhythm, melody, polyphony, harmony (though this in restricted measure), solo and *tutti*, voices and instruments—all were used with a balanced sense of their values; and the balance of those values gave form to the B minor Mass. Having secured his themes, from whatever source, they were developed, not in the cause of reactionary religion, but according to the mathematical principles inherent in music itself.

The B minor Mass is the product of a mind which had passed beyond religion to that deeper and more important mental sphere whence religion itself had once issued to confuse the ways of men; for in music mystery is revealed as the solution of a mathematical problem—mysticism and mathematics are reconciled.

The emotional background of life is none the less real because it seems mystical. Music is none the less human because it is mathematical. However certain we may be of the material basis and implications of life, there is inevitably a residue of mystical emotion to be discharged. Such emotion, entirely disregarded, may be the cause of what is known as inspiration; but it may also be a cause of mental degradation. In such a work as the B minor Mass mystical emotions

are both discharged and relieved. The words of the Mass have little to do with the problem. In so far as they mean anything at all, they are a hindrance to a full appreciation of the work. But they mean very little. They are the remains of a dead rite which Bach cut to pieces to make pegs upon which to hang the products of his mature genius. That genius was itself the product of a whole people at war with reaction and superstition.

I have referred to the formative nature of the very elements of music. Rhythm is order. Rhythmic melody is ordered freedom. (We have already noticed the disordered autocratic freedom of plain-song melody without the backbone of rhythm.) Polyphony is the more complex order which results from the mutual accommodation of rhythmic melodies. In the B minor Mass all factors are accepted and correlated.

There are the powerful primitive rhythms of the Sanctus and its *Pleni sunt Coeli*. There are the Cum Sancto Spiritu and the Et Resurrexit wherein the melodic masses swarm in the ecstasy of personal surrender. In theme after theme we have evidence of that free development of melodic dividuality which makes the chorus parts of solo interest to the singers. The polyphony is the most balanced complex of musical forces which has been known during the whole period of Christian civilization. Every *tutti* has solo elements; every solo has a background of mingling details. The increase of dissonance in Bach's work compares with Palestrina's polyphony as city life compares with the cloister, as a group of human beings by Dürer compares with the Paradise of Fra Angelico.

Resulting from that increase of dissonance, there is an infinitely deeper probing for the problems of harmony.

Harmony is the element whereby music reveals a complete conception in a moment of time. Browning

expressed its nature when he said that three notes, sounded simultaneously, created not a fourth note, but a star! Not by Bach were the constellations of harmony explored. He was concerned with the world of men, and took his stars as they fell.

Ever since primitive melodists felt the kinship existing between the notes of the triad harmony had been haunting the ways of music. Some of the tunes of the North American Indians had a triadic character. Concords offered an element which bound the polyphony of the people. Palestrina stated it in simple terms. It could not arrive as a fully conscious detail of the musician's art while polyphony crowded the sound, and so long as life was full for a large number of people their natural song was necessarily polyphonic. Any lesser song must hinder their individual growth. Even when Bach's music progressed with rhythmic simultaneity, as in his chorales, the separate melodic lines were still the master's chief concern.

Bach's most definite harmonic statement is contained in the Chromatic Fantasia, and that does not take us very far. Its dissonances were conceived polyphonically, and its only real harmonic emphasis confined to the diminished seventh, the chord of no-man's-land.

Nevertheless, here was a new factor demanding recognition at the moment when polyphony had been completely co-ordinated with the previously developed elements of music.

Since Bach's time harmony has had an increasingly formative influence in music. Polyphony naturally weakened with the diminution of communal freedom; but musicians were not willing to lose the richness of combined tones, so they learned to mould musical combinations to their will, as politicians learned to mould the racial, national and class divisions of the people.

The Mass was one means whereby the people could most easily be influenced through their superstitions; and harmony became an increasingly formative influence in the masses composed after Bach's time.

As an act of real religious worship the Mass came to an end in the work of Bach. The instrumental sections of the Mass in B minor, short though they are, are so significant in the matter of expression, that the emotion engendered by the rite itself must, upon a fairly cultured mind, be less powerful. By force of tradition and habit, and upon simple minds, the mystical effect of the rite could be maintained; but when people have reached the degree of emotional sensitiveness and intellectual development which enable them to appreciate the pieces of Bach, they are indeed unlikely to find much solace in the sacrificial ceremony itself.

Especially significant is the piece which ushers in the first fugal Kyrie and the use of the solo violin in the Benedictus. The words of the Kyrie, after the first imperative cry, are redundant: they do but say with the lips what the music says with the whole being. The violin in the Benedictus is at once a shimmering halo such as no painter had brush light enough to show, and a revelation of present bliss beside which the assurance of the vocal line is a disappointment.

In such ways Bach proved that in the art of music existed all that was needed by the human imagination of mysterious longing and spiritual rapture. By such tokens religion was dead, and music had taken its place.

Later musical Masses have added nothing of mystical revelation to what was recorded in the B minor; and since the days of Bach only one setting has added anything of importance to the story of musical art.

Haydn played his happy little game with the sacrifice. He was like a child in the chancel.

Mozart made fine music, of an atheist kind. I judge it, not by the religious professions Mozart made in

letters to his father, but by the music of his finest Mass—the one in C minor which, like the Requiem, he did not complete. The C minor Mass has many points which prove how Mozart despised his text. I am not referring to his conscious brain-belief, but to the certainty which existed in the marrow of his bones, and forced him to make music which derided the ceremony. That marrow-faith was expressed by Bach in full musical consciousness in spite of the fact that his brain-faith was opposed to the Catholic ritual. The real nature of Mozart's faith is to be judged by such details as the music for the Incarnation and the Remission of Sins. For the Incarnatus he composed a mixture of mock simplicity and operatic acrobatics which suggests that his Christ was born in a theatre rather than a stable. When singing of the forgiveness of sins a gay and comical little figure informs us that peccata are indeed peccadilloes.

Such fooling can only be explained as the expression of a natural atheist with his fingers to his nose at the very thought of a deity. When once its projected occasion was over Mozart did not think it worth while to finish the work. All this is not to Mozart's discredit. It is the inevitable, though heartless laughter of a man who has been deceived in what he had once regarded as the most vital matter of his life. I heard such laughter the other day from a communist who believes that the present Russian government have betrayed their trust.

Beethoven came nearer than Mozart to what is generally accepted as free-thinking; but he wrote a Mass of real significance, though that significance was not what had been intended by the Church.

For the consecration of his pupil, Rudolph of Austria, to the Archbishopric of Olmütz, Beethoven made his Mass in D. For the composer, as for Mozart, his creative intention was more important than the

occasion; and as with the Mass of Mozart, its occasion passed with the work still unfinished. That Beethoven finished it subsequently to that occasion suggests that in some way or other the composition of the Mass was the expression of a real inner need.

The form of the Mass in D shows that it was designed for the actual religious ceremony. Bach had cut up the Gloria and Credo to serve a purely musical purpose. Beethoven conceived them as single pieces. Yet he had outgrown the narrowness of Christianity to at least as great an extent as the earlier master. Of that his biographers offer evidence enough; and the emotional revelations of the Mass itself prove it.

Bach had written religious music for an irreligious world until he was finally driven to express in music the depths he had plumbed in his communal conception of life. Down in the mystical depths of his subconsciousness he sought final refuge from the world, especially in his chorale-preludes.

Beethoven was in more open and avowed revolt. He also dived into the depths of his subconscious nature, but did so with a full and conscious intention of bringing what he found there back into the real world. Of that intention there is evidence in the sub-titles and allusions he made to some of his most important works. But an 'heroic' symphony or a phrase in which Fate is heard 'knocking at the door' could only be bare hints of his intention. What he brought back in his instrumental works cannot be told in words, or Beethoven would not, could not, have told it in music.

A comparison of the two greatest Masses may help in an understanding of both of them.

Bach's is more generalized than Beethoven's. Music which Bach had written for other words served also for the words of the Mass, because he was less intent on the ideas of the rite itself than of giving general expression to the moods in which all religion arose. He

was realist enough to ensure that the music was suitable to the superficial suggestions of the words. He set 'resurrectionem mortuorum' to rising phrases, and 'passus et sepultus' in the traditional mood of awe. In that detail Bach did better than Beethoven. Bach moulded the phrases into separate, isolated, and self-complete pieces.

Beethoven, faced with a more concentrated task, played here and there with a word for the sake of a dramatic effect, as in that same 'resurrectionem mortuorum' where the very expectation of future personal life seems to be stated with incredulity; a magnificent ascent on the first word is followed by a sudden drop as into the tomb itself.

Bach had an easier task: by subdividing the Gloria and Credo into sections the words ceased to be more than clues to the general expression of the music.

Beethoven had to provide a Mass for practical use on an occasion which for him had a personal importance, though the ceremony had little or no religious meaning for him. So he had a harder problem to solve. He had to discover ways of setting the Credo and the Gloria as consistent musical entities, in spite of the nature of their material which offers so little to the musician in the way of poetic form.

That problem had not arisen to the same degree for Palestrina, because the unworldly placidity of the Italian master's music provided an homogeneity of its own. Palestrina's was a music untroubled by the world of humans. Any of his pieces might have gone on for ever like the circles of Fra Angelico's 'Paradise.' Such artists had no need of involved architectural schemes.

Beethoven, however, was of earthy make. His genius was either humanly tender or almost physically rough. He had to carve out such a musical form as suited that genius. He could not sing 'I believe' except in terms

which left no doubt that what he believed was vital and present for him. So in the Credo he made his bold, loud affirmation; and when a little later he was faced with the idea of divine invisibility, of which he had no knowledge, he dropped his affirmative note for soft music with what seems to be a purposely weak modulation.¹ The Credo is full of such detail. Beethoven's double problem involved the production of a structure which, in basic plan would satisfy him as an artist, and yet allow him to interpolate details which are strangely foreign to the general plan. It was as if he had been called upon to build a cathedral, and then required from time to time to add little chapels to doubtful saints in inconvenient places.

His solution of the main problem was to turn the Gloria and Credo into choral symphonies. An examination of the two pieces will show that they are constructed on the formal plan he had inherited for his instrumental works.

The Gloria opens with an Allegro Vivace, passes on to a slow movement at the Qui Tollis, to a short scherzo at the Quoniam, bursting from that into a finale of exultation; then the whole is rounded off with an ecstatic but unliturgical restatement of the opening phrase.

A similar course was followed in the less tractable material of the Credo. Religious tradition suggested three main movements to express the sections devoted to the three persons of the Trinity. Beethoven refused that arrangement. He opened with a strong declaration of his belief, with curious emphasis on himself and omnipotent power. His slow movement followed at the Et Incarnatus. Quick movement again at the

¹ Of course I do not mean that the modulation is weak in the sense of being ineffective. It was Beethoven's very strength which caused him to use the weakest of all modulations—into the mediant—when he had to express a sudden uncertainty, just after he had asserted his faith with such positiveness.

Et Resurrexit; and, when the word 'Credo' gave the cue, back to the affirmation of the first movement. That time, however, it merely served as introduction to the finale in triple time.

Here we clearly see that though Beethoven's Mass was intended for Church use its formative influences were not religious but musical.

But although Beethoven looked to music rather than to religion for the form of his Mass he was no mere musician. More consciously even than Bach he was bound by the laws of his nature to express the realities of life itself—not merely the deep unspeakable life which he shared with all men, but to a certain extent even the common external life of his passing day.

When we find that Beethoven has written entirely unsuitable music for the invisibility of God and the resurrection of the dead, it is hard to believe that the music was accidental, and resulted merely from his love of suddenly contrasted musical effects. It can scarcely be doubted that the various movements of his Mass in D reveal the realistic nature of his genius in denial as well as in affirmation.

For the most part such details of doubt were personal to himself, and would have been unnoticed by the majority of listeners except as characteristic of the master's style. But in the battle-music of the *Dona Nobis* he associated himself with the material world of his time, and that sort of intrusion could not be overlooked or mistaken by anyone.

The *Agnus Dei* had always been a number in which composers had uttered such pathos as they knew. It is the piece in which the help of the sacrificial victim is invoked that the sins of the world may be transferred to its innocent shoulders. Therein the primitive interpretation of the Catholic Church is explicitly stated; and Beethoven in his setting followed for a little while the traditional expression. Then he seems suddenly to

have bethought himself of the reality of the world, and in what its sin chiefly consisted.

In the capitalist world which had developed on the failure of communal Christian principles war had become a normal condition of civilized life. War is not necessarily opposed to civilization, and has in fact broken out more frequently among people living in towns and cities than among agricultural people. Consequent on Napoleon's success as a leader of revolutionary armies Beethoven had once regarded him as the likely saviour of Europe; but he withdrew his admiration when the revolutionary soldier became the imperialist autocrat. In spite of Napoleon's pretensions his royal enemies in other countries—Czar, Emperor, and kings—could only gain sufficient popular support to bring about his downfall by promising a greater measure of freedom to the common people throughout Europe. Napoleon was defeated because of that promise. The other royalties then changed their minds, ignored their promises, and made plans which were certain to involve the peoples in further slavery and war.

Beethoven found himself required by the very nature of the Mass to make music, first for the idea that the blood-thirsty nature of capitalist politics can be sanctified by mystically transferring its crimes to the shoulders of an innocent 'lamb of God'; and then for a futile prayer for peace. Prayers for peace had been going up in Mass-formation for ages. Palestrina and other tractable composers had set the *Dona Nobis* to music of such a simple, quiet nature that a favourable answer seemed a foregone conclusion, the prayer itself almost unnecessary. Bach had certainly expressed a striving for peace rather than a certainty of it. Haydn had once subtitled a Mass 'in tempore belli' and introduced drums and trumpets; but it was not in the old man's gentle nature to face the actual problem.

When Beethoven reached the *Dona Nobis* of his Mass in D he too pursued the usual course and sang of peace as of a normal state of mind, as it is for an artist regularly engaged on his work. But that kind of internal peace was too personal and mystical to content Beethoven when actual war was becoming the normal condition of civilization. Having developed the internal mood, his chorus reiterates with special accents the words Peace! Peace! Peace! in a climax and a failing cry.

Of what avail the mystical peace of a well-paid and war-shielded Church, of what avail the internal peace of his art, when the people of Europe were being humbugged into wars of national freedom from which they gained slavery, and into wars of international finance from which they gained poverty?

So in Beethoven's *Dona Nobis Pacem* battle-music breaks the weak plea of pacificism. That is followed by a section chorally related to the Ninth Symphony which was already moving in his mind—the work in which he most openly declared his communist faith. This section of his *Dona Nobis*, with its significant orchestral interpolation, clearly expresses the idea that there will be no real peace without a struggle. It is followed by a weakening of the cry for a peace which has *not* been won. There it all is in the music, down to the failure of the struggle as Beethoven knew it and expressed it in his last weak, pitiful choral cadence. And then the abrupt close of the work, as if the master had no more patience with such a foolish prayer.

Beethoven had evidently begun to feel that what was really needed was a much more positive attitude on the part of the people. 'Nicht diese Töne! sondern lasst uns angenehmere anstimmen, und freudenvollere'—not a cry to a shadowy god for a peace which never came, but a general will to insist on the joy of life here

below. And so joyfully forth to victory! 'Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen'; for it is to those words in the Choral Symphony that the passage in the Mass is unmistakably related.

From the time that Beethoven in his Prometheus music and Heroic Symphony had definitely aligned himself with the Prometheans of this world, the god-defiers of all ages, he had shown a tendency to revert to the polyphonic style of communal music—the style which Haydn and Mozart in their parasitic service had been inclined to drop. In their Masses as in their other works the part-writing had lost a good half of the Bachian multi-melodicity, and soloists had been given disproportionate importance. In fact the choral Mass had become a stage for vocal display. In a work which had originated in a communal rite it had been possible for Mozart to give that silly acrobatic stunt to his leading lady. Like most sensual natures Mozart was very innocent, and it is quite likely that he felt a woman with a lovely voice had as much right to a prominent place in the sacrificial ceremony as a boy or a man. Indeed it may be argued that it was intended for a boy's voice; but if anyone can think that they know little of the technical differences between a boy's voice and an adult soprano's. In connection with that very Mass, Mozart wrote to his father saying he felt much more holy when he took the sacrament with his wife at his side. A natural feeling when we recall the relation between sexual and religious emotion; but scarcely a reason for giving his wife a gymnastic exercise at the very altar. That was the sort of absurdity which resulted from the decadence of the communal spirit with its musical expression in choral polyphony.

It is arguable that the Mass should have been allowed to have rational development in a Dionysian direction; but that it should have lost its communal

nature was a movement in an irrational direction, consequent on the growing separation between the Church and the people. Haydn to a small extent, and Mozart to a greater, had continued to use an intermittent polyphony in the choral parts of their Masses; but in the later work of Beethoven polyphony resumed its function as the natural song of the great world where dissonances were becoming exacerbated and ungovernable beyond the experience and imagination of the world known to Bach. That too was reflected in the angularity and occasional awkwardness of the Beethoven polyphony.

Bach had worked in a polyphonic tradition which had not been broken. Beethoven tried to resume it under conditions which were antipathetic to polyphony and all that it signified. The kind of music which best pleased and fitted that artificial world was the glib gush of Rossini and other superfloreate Italians. In that kind of music the dividual element of melody assumed autocratic pretensions. Heine acutely remarked that Rossini's music was merely melodic because it was the expression of a separate and isolated mentality. The same applies in lesser measure to the music of Haydn and Mozart. Those three in varying degrees of parasitic dependence served the ruling class of their times. Beethoven's sympathy with all men involved him in a bigger task. For the due execution of that task he had to strive against the tide, back to the methods of Bach. It was because Beethoven was striving against the musical spirit of his age that his counterpoint clashed and stumbled.

I said that Bach, in composing a music which offered fuller satisfaction to the mystical spirit than did religion itself, made an end of the Mass as a musical ceremony. His Mass in B minor was a true, complete, and final expression in music of the medieval tradition of the Last Supper. That idea is supported by every

Mass which has been composed since his time; and by every Mass which has not been composed. The subsequent work of Beethoven expressed, not the tradition, but a revolt against the tradition. Though in point of form it is more convenient for the rite than Haydn's and Mozart's, by Catholics it is found unsuitable. It applies more to the real world of men than to the unreal world of holy men.

Later Masses are even less suited to clerical requirements. Some, like Schubert's, have been 'edited' for sacrificial purposes. Others, like Vaughan-Williams', have reverted to the Middle Ages for inspiration. But the most distinctive of recent Masses have been those which have arisen in moods which have had nothing to do with the ecclesiastical rite. There is Ethel Smyth's: she storming a heaven which, according to Professor Jeans, is receding at the rate of 12,000 miles a second,¹ as she stormed the House of Commons with a demand for the vote just as democracy was crashing. There is Delius's 'Mass of Life,' seeking in the gospel of Nietzsche a Dionysian development of the Mass. And—perhaps most significant of all—there is the greatest Catholic composer of our time writing no Mass, and avoiding the Last Supper in his oratorio of 'The Apostles.'

As for Stravinsky's 'Sacré du Printemps,' which has many features in common with a primitive Voodoo sacrifice—that I propose to discuss a little later.

The only musical work which continues the development proposed by Bach, and confirmed by the reaction of Beethoven, is 'Parsifal.'

Wagner himself was fully aware that by means of music was expressible all that had been of importance in the mystical aspect of religion. (Law and science

¹ Since Professor Jeans curdled our blood with prophecies of cosmic doom, another scientist has assured us that it was all due to a misunderstanding. Science also seems to have its theologic dialects.

accounted for the rest of it.) Even as he was organizing the first production of 'Parsifal' he wrote:

Men of science persuade us that Copernicus reduced the ancient Church belief to ruins with his planetary system, since it robbed God Almighty of his heavenly seat. The Church, however, as all may see, has not felt materially embarrassed by that discovery. For it and for all believers, God dwelleth still in heaven, or, as Schiller sings, 'above the starry tent.' The god within the human breast, of whose transcendent being our great mystics were so certain sure—that god who needs no heavenly home—has given the parsons more ado. . . . Yet this approachless god of ours had begotten much within us, and when at last he had to vanish, he left us, in eternal memory of him—Music. . . . To us music gives the power of regeneration and rebirth.¹

When Wagner wrote his early work, 'The Love-Feast of the Apostles,' he conceived an historical scene, and combined the Protestant memorial service with the Catholic idea of sacrifice; and he still looked to Rome as the centre of Christianity. But he spent his life in continual self-education, and at the other end of his career, wrote 'Parsifal,' in which the love-feast is not historical but symbolical, and the centre of his faith was transferred from Rome to Bayreuth.

In 'Parsifal' art takes the place of priestcraft. The artist is recognized as the true successor of the holy man. The artist offers his ideas, not as dogmas to be refused at spiritual peril, but as imaginative conceptions arising from his subconsciousness, where he draws inspiration from the deepest wells of reality. In that subconscious sense of unity with the whole of human beings, and to some extent with material life which extends beyond humanity, the artist, and especially the musician, finds his rightful function in life. He becomes

¹ *Minor Bayreuth Papers*: Introduction to the Year 1880. Eng. trans. Wagner's *Prose Works*, Vol. VI. Compare that last sentence with D. H. Lawrence's idea of the significance of the religious dance among primitive people. See p. 4.

the dispenser of a natural force which 'gives the power of regeneration and rebirth.'

Amfortas, the priestly head of the Grail community, had become inefficient and treacherous. He was no longer able to reveal the sacramental mysteries, which, in any case, he had only learned at second-hand. Parsifal had to take his place.

'Parsifal' developed not only that suggestion, but other aspects of the matter which do not concern us here; and as I have already discussed the subject in some detail in my little study of 'Parsifal,' I must refer the reader to that for a fuller interpretation of Wagner's scheme as I have understood it.

In the same essay I showed how in 'Parsifal' Wagner reverted to the more communal elements of music—the dance and choral polyphony. In fact, in so far as the decline of Christendom allowed, Wagner in his last work summed up all that had been valid in Christian belief, including the problem of sexuality in relation to the creative mind. The autumnal languor of the work arose less in the age of the composer, as is generally believed, and more in the mental atmosphere of his age, coupled with the fact that Wagner himself, in order to fulfil his work even partially, had been forced to accept a royal patronage, instead of the communal conditions which he had demanded for his work.

Bach dissected the Mass to suit his deepest musical and emotional purpose, because he felt that there was a more vital mystical revelation in music than in religion.

Beethoven related the music of the Mass to the material world, because musical revelation without application to life is but a finer form of superstition. Some men pride themselves in being above the battle; but not Beethoven's sort.

Wagner caused Parsifal to refuse Gurnemanz's invitation to the Christian love-feast because Wagner

himself—the composer who of all musicians has had the greatest intellectual capacity, as well as a large share of intuitive creative power—had become aware of his own real business in life. It was not Wagner's business to make pleasant sounds to glorify false religious ideas, but to examine the real life of his time, and revitalize that life by means of music which gives 'the power of regeneration and rebirth'; because, in the words of Lawrence, it carries us 'back to the great central source where there is rest and unspeakable renewal.'

MUSIC OF MOTHER-LOVE

As musically expressed during Christian civilization, mother-love branches out in three directions. There is the pride of first motherhood, chiefly expressed in settings of the Magnificat. There is the love of infancy, expressed in lullabies and carols. And there is the love of the son whose life is tragedy, expressed in later carols and settings of the Stabat Mater.

In so far as this music develops from folk-song it has a personal, immediate, and real quality. In so far as it refers, not to any mother and child, but to Mary and Jesus, it has a symbolic value, shifting according to the possibilities of its interpretation.

We saw that folk-lullabies showed an advance of maternal consciousness beyond what was indicated by savage lullabies. Folk-singers were not content merely with getting their babies to sleep, but dwelt on their character and future. There are literary carols of the fifteenth century which link up the songs of civilization with the less consciously cultured songs of the people. For example:

Lullay, my child, and weep no more,
Sleep and be thou still;
The king of bliss thy father is,
For it was his will.

There is one in which Mary rejoices in her pregnancy—a kind of folk-magnificat:

Under a tree in sporting me
Alone by a woodside,
I heard a maid that sweetly said
'I am with child this tide.'

Some of them contain domestic touches:

And she held him in her lap,
He took her lovely by the pap,
And thereof sweetly he took a nap
And sucked his fill of sweet liquor.

In several carols Mary extends her mother-love to 'all mankind,' asking of her god-babe that He will 'make all men merry on this day.' Such carols are clearly derived from the folk-stem; but though they are more self-conscious in their rhythmic and rhyming adventures they are not more beautiful. The significant point is that here in verse, as a little later in music, the connection between folk-art and the art of civilization is obvious. What was lost when artists became the servants of the ruling class was not merely contact with the creative class of workers, but contact with the very roots of their arts.

Literary lullabies of that kind ceased to be made after the fifteenth century, a fact of extra interest in view of the early disappearance of the folk-lullaby. Several even of the fifteenth-century lullabies are concerned with the death rather than the birth of Jesus:

Lullay, lullay, little child, mine own dear smart.
How shalt thou suffer the sharp spear to Thy heart? ¹

Those two facts seem to suggest that after the breakdown of communal Christianity musical interest was

¹ Quoted from Miss Rickert's *Ancient English Christmas Carols*. The same carol exists in a simpler form. Either a more literary turn was given to a folk-carol, or a later carol received salutary treatment on the lips of folk-singers.

shifted from the Nativity of Jesus to his Passion. As sculptors transferred their skill from the Madonna and Child to the Pieta, so musicians transferred theirs from Magnificat and Christmas song to settings of the Passion story and the Franciscan hymn, 'Stabat Mater Dolorosa.'

The stupid destruction of Madonna-and-Child statuary must not be ascribed wholly to Puritan passions, which themselves were the result of a previously existing evil.

Up to the thirteenth century Madonna worship had expressed one of the ascensive forces of civilization, revealing a growing sense of what was special and beautiful in womanhood. In later centuries popular feeling, and creative æsthetic feeling, were placed in opposition to Mariolatry because of its associations with the repression of popular life and thought. The worship of Mary and Jesus as types of all mothers and children diminished to a worship of *bourgeois* family life. Many fine paintings by Titian, Dürer, and other artists bear witness to that. Such paintings are not the product of a creative spirit, but the mere application of artists' skill to ideas which were really destructive in their suggestion.

When the ruling classes took a proprietary interest in the Holy Family, that family became less holy for the masses of the people, and for those greater creative artists who realized their work in the service of life, and therefore relied upon mass-feeling for the individual force known as inspiration. So it could happen that men like Milton and Shelley took their stand by the side of the Puritans, who destroyed symbols which had come to be associated with the enslavement of the people.

The finest English musician of the sixteenth century was Byrd. He made a number of pieces for virginals which are based on folk-tunes. So he effected just

such a contact between the music of the people and the music of civilization as we have just noticed to have existed between folk and literary carols. But it was possible for Byrd to compose a lullaby which is as snobbish as a Holy Family by Titian or Dürer:

My sweet little darling, my comfort and joy,
Sing lullaby, lulla;
In beauty surpassing the princes of Troy,
Sing lullaby, lulla.
Now hush child, now sleep child, thy mother's sweet boy,
Sing lullaby, lulla.
The gods bless and keep thee from cruel annoy,
Sing lullaby, lulla.

Byrd did, it is true, throw off the Christian religion in that lullaby; but only to take up another polytheistic faith. The Christian element in the earlier religious lullabies offered a generally acceptable symbolism. It influenced the feeling and treatment of all women and children; and, as we saw, in connection with the 'Christ Child's Lullaby' ¹ could be brought to bear even upon a feckless lad and his step-mother. But the pagan mother of the Renaissance lullaby is a complete snob. An average mother would perhaps admit that the beauty of her babe might be surpassed by the beauty of a god. Byrd's mother is content if only her child's beauty exceeds that of Trojan princes. If she had less love than a peasant mother, at any rate she had more learning.

Byrd's music for that lullaby has affinity with folk-music and rings true as melody; and he gives to the song as personal a tone as possible for him, by reducing to a minimum the polyphonic style which was the only sort of fine music that he knew. But the fact that he had to write so dividual a song when his technic was entirely derived from the communal art, is a sign of the unnatural relation which existed between the

¹ See p. 47.

verse and music of his time—between the consciously directed art of poetry, and the more subconsciously evolved art of beautiful sound.

A style which had originated in the communal desire and creative spirit of the people was being paradoxically carried to a certain degree of secular expression in the service of the master-class; for Byrd and his fellow madrigalians were either private servants of rich persons or semi-public servants of the Church which was controlled by those rich persons.

In Byrd's time the creative conditions which had evoked polyphony had disappeared; but the musical style remained, and only slowly decayed to that later style of dividuality which made the lute-song a truer form of art than a song with accompaniment of several strings. It is the secular, dividual, personal form of the verse which makes its musical form inappropriate. The same objection does not apply to Byrd's sacred lullabies. Such songs, being religious, were still in a certain degree symbolical, and applied in theory to all Christian persons. But the tendency of the growing mind to move from religious superstition to secular reality necessarily prevailed, even though the development towards intellectual freedom was confined to the ruling class.

A recent ecclesiastical interpretation of that movement has represented religious art as the limited, and secular art as the typical, thing! Father Bede Jarrett, in his *Social Theories of the Middle Ages*, describes the passage from religious to secular creativeness in the art of painting:

The Mother and Child were painted as before; but the divine light that the artists had striven to give to the features of both was waning. It was not the Mother and Child now so much as any mother and any child. Move from Giotto to Andrea del Sarto and you have a whole pageant of art from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, the attempt passing from a representation of a divine thing to a representation of human things.

It is the general policy of the modern Catholic Church to ignore the part played by the medieval Church in the betrayal of Christian civilization; so clerical advocates emphasize the religious nature of the earlier, popular, and typical art, and the secularity of the later, personal, and *bourgeois* art. But the early religious art was greater, not because of its closer association with superstition, but because, in spite of that association, the popular will was able to interpret the pictorial symbols as types of all human beings.

When later artists, freed from some of the Christian superstitions, contrived to express popular feeling in spite of class disability and prejudice, they naturally touched lightly on the divine and inhuman aspects of the symbolic personages, and emphasized their human and typical nature. Rembrandt, in his 'Holy Family with Angels,' painted, not a picture of a Mother and Child who once were and can never be again, but a simple cottage group, which declared to all cottagers what was lovely in their own family experience. That fact Father Jarrett admits; but he seems not to realize that an art which reveals the holiness of 'any mother and any child' is necessarily a finer art in a social sense than one which merely paints the idea of a divine maternity which can never be repeated—an art which must be appreciated less and less with the natural growth of the human mind.

As for the divine light that the artists had 'striven to give'—that, of course, is an idea of the Catholic imagination. If the phrase means anything at all, it refers either to the suggestion of human emotion which affects human pose and facial expression, or it refers to a magical suggestion which can only be effected by symbolic or theatrical means. If it means suggestion of emotion, there is more of it in later than earlier paintings. If it means a magical suggestion, Rembrandt knew the trick of it better than the primitives with their

merely symbolic haloes. But though Rembrandt lighted his holy family with the magic of his theatrical mannerism, it remained a family of cottagers. All such magical trickery had, in fact, been transferred to its rightful place, the mob-theatre.

The evil did not lie where Father Jarrett places it, in the passage from religious and typical to secular and personal representation. That merely showed the transition from a superstitious to a realist conception of motherhood. The evil lay in the fact that the passage was from a religious and symbolical conception which applied largely, and perhaps wholly, to the poorest class, to a secular and personal conception which applied to the leisured class. The masses were left with their superstitions, but deprived of the realities of which their superstitions had been mystical expressions. Moreover, judging by the increase of theology in later folk-songs, the people were also checked in their natural tendency to rid themselves of superstition.

So far we have thought only of the lesser musical expressions of mother-love in Christian civilization—expressions which found their natural music in rhythmic melody, and were unsuited to the communal significance of developed polyphony.

The objection to polyphony does not hold for settings of the Magnificat and Stabat Mater.

In so far as Mary and Jesus were symbolic figures, and recognized as such, those great Christian songs took on a more than personal character, and found fitting music in multi-melodic form. On the other hand, when the symbolism obscured the reality, those songs, especially in their Latin form, can only be regarded as expressions of obscurantism; for such, polyphonic settings, however fashionable and well made, are obviously unsuitable.

Some of the ideas of popular Christianity are openly

stated in the Magnificat; and it was in Germany, where the communal cause endured longest and most bravely, and where polyphony reached its finest forms, that the Magnificat received its finest musical settings.

It was in Italy, where the popular cause suffered the earliest and most fatal blows, and the reaction from polyphony resulted in music of the most degraded kind, that the Stabat Mater superseded the Magnificat as the chief expression of mother-love.

That contrast is all the more striking because, to begin with, the earlier Italian composers possessed a finer technical basis for polyphony. The expressive nature of the Magnificat of Schütz is more marked than the settings of Palestrina, but Palestrina's are more freely expressed in polyphonic form. It is the more notable, therefore, that in Palestrina's single setting of the Stabat Mater his style has settled down into a prevailing homophony, while Bach developed the German Magnificat polyphonically beyond anything conceivable by Italian masters. It is evident that the inspiring force lay not at all in the mere fact of their polyphonic art, but in their will to express the popular ideas contained in their songs.

Palestrina's calm and conventual muse was simply unable to realize in music what the scattering of the proud master-class and the filling of the hungry meant in fact. He set the 'Fecit potentiam' and 'Esurientes' with some regard to suitable melodic phraseology, and that was all. Schütz, born only twenty years later than Palestrina's meridian, had not the Italian master's skill, but he scattered the proud with a real plebeian gusto, and filled the hungry till their waists were realities. It was just the realistic emphasis on those phrases which marked the difference between the composer who was setting dictated words to music, and the composer who was freely setting ideas, real

feelings, arising in the world of human beings. Bach, of course, carried on the reality as well as the art.

Many of the comparisons already made between the form and intention of Palestrina's and Bach's Masses apply also to their Magnificats. Palestrina's were made for the counter-reformation of the Jesuits. Bach's though written for, and used as a part of, the Lutheran liturgy, broke up the song into several movements, and developed (as Schütz's had done) instrumental episodes, probing down into music for the revelation of a reality deeper than could be expressed in words. Bach's settings of the Magnificat, as of the Mass, are of greater value than the service they were made to adorn.

As originally performed in Bach's time the popular meaning of the Magnificat was emphasized. The movements of his Latin setting were interspersed with congregational chorales, and the whole approximately dramatized by means of a cradle-scene.

The reader must be once again referred to my book on Bach for an explanation of what German congregations understood and felt when, in Passion and Magnificat, they sang their own chorales. They were eventually eliminated from Bach's Magnificat. The Leipsic Town Council, Bach's *bourgeois* masters, objected also to the dramatic scene. It was just by means of the chorales and dramatic realism that the people had participated in, and insisted on, the original social aspect of the Magnificat. That was an aspect which could easily be overlooked in the too frequent performance of the words as a part of the liturgy, without any special underlining of its original meaning.

The mother of their god had declared that the mighty should be deposed, and the poor restored to fair conditions of life. It is noticeable how important that section is in Bach's settings, and even more powerfully in the German version, 'Meine Seele erhebt

den Herren.' The insistence on Latin words in a Protestant country is a proof that the Lutheran clergy were as much afraid of its revolutionary phraseology as their Catholic brethren. It was bad enough when the men of the working-classes underlined such difficult Christian doctrines. If the women followed Mary's example the petticoat power of all the churches would be at an end.

Astorga was an Italian contemporary of Bach's. His setting of the *Stabat Mater* compares with Palestrina's as Botticelli's poignant and bewildered Lamentations with the calm suffering of Perugino's *Pieta*.

Hear Bach's German Magnificat and then Astorga's *Stabat Mater*, and you will at once feel in your very bowels the difference between a people who are still striving for the life of their spirit, and a people who have lost hope.

Astorga had himself experienced something of political tyranny, and had witnessed the execution of his own father. Not for him the glad hope of Mary's song, but the pathos and despair of the Franciscan hymn. He had no reason for believing that the hungry would be filled with good things; but he had bitter knowledge of one who had suffered '*per transivit gladius*.'

With the continued and rapid decay of Christian civilization the *Stabat Mater* quickly degenerated through the cynical setting of Pergolesi and the blatant bluster of Rossini, until it became a mere excuse for composers in want of verse which would enable them to use St Peter's keys to the hall of fame.

But music cannot be effectually attached to ideas that are dead. Astorga could make a true music for the *Stabat Mater* because he was expressing the feelings of those who endure wrong, knowing that they cannot revolt against it. Modern settings have been

mere exercises in musical romanticism. Dvorak's is perhaps the best of them. His music gloats over the feelings it is unable to express, and the music is all that matters. In a certain sense that was true of Bach's Latin Magnificat. But there again we have to appreciate the difference between a music which is made for the words, like Dvorak's Stabat, and a music which was made for the feeling which had originally suggested, and now penetrates more deeply than, the words.

In one detail Bach's settings of the Magnificat are inferior to many Catholic musicians' settings of the same song and the Stabat Mater—in the lack of real feminine quality. Perhaps that came out in the lost Bach Magnificat for soprano solo; but it is more likely to have been absent. There is nothing of it in the Magnificat of Schütz. In fact it was in keeping with the general Protestant outlook that a few male gods should be kept, but all female gods destroyed. No woman seems to have made music for the Magnificat. The same industrial civilization which prevented peasant women from singing their babies to sleep, and objected to Mary, the typical mother, having any authority over her own child, precluded women from professional education. Women could be slaves in the house, field, or factory, but they might not share in the formative activities of life. As the Mass in B minor stands to the savage communion song quoted on p. 11, so we could have wished for some developed expression of the moods hinted at in savage and folk-lullabies. No male composer has approached the feminine quality of 'The Christ Child's Lullaby.' The nearest Bach could get to it was in the Christmas Oratorio. That contains a pleasant lullaby wherein the reality is transferred to a rocking motive in the orchestra, but it is no great revelation of maternal experience. Mozart avoided it; for his women, babies.

would have been blunders. Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms made pretty lullabies—romantic studies. Schumann in his 'Frauenliebe' stopped short at the reality which exists beyond the *bourgeois* marriage service.

Again it was Wagner, with his avidity for life, who made a few real, though not very developed, studies of maternal feeling, in the parts of Sieglinde and Kundry, though he had no room for the most characteristic mother of all, Parsifal's mother, Herzeleide. Sieglinde is aroused by Brunnhilde to the magnificent thought that in her body she carries the hero-rebel who will make an end of religion and politics based on money. In Kundry there is musical expression of the devastating maternal feeling which may ruin the man she loves. The Siegfried Idyll links the Christmas lullabies of tradition with Wagner's own prophetic conceptions.

Since Wagner the most characteristic parental songs I know are Mahler's 'Kindertodtenlieder,' Ravel's 'Noel des Jouets,' and—at last a woman's music!—a lullaby from Soviet Russia by a composer named Lazareva. The songs by the two men are typical of a decadent civilization. Beautiful though the Mahler songs are, we cannot believe that any child's death would be a subject for song if life itself were worth living. In Ravel's song the Christmas story is treated as the thing it has actually become—a child's toy-time:

Vierge Marie, en crinoline,
Ses yeux d'émail sans cesse ouverts,
En attendant Bonhomme hiver
Vielle Jésus qui se dodine.

Lazareva ushers in a new kind of mother who was musically dumb during Christian civilization:

Sleep, my little darling baby,
Mother's precious little pigeon.
Stop your noise you factory hooters,

Or you'll wake my little baby.
 Some day he will be a man,
 Then he'll answer when you call.

You will learn to love your labour;
 You will have a happier life,
 You will learn how many tears
 We have driven from the world;
 You will learn how many suffered
 Happier days to win for you.

Near the Kremlin wall there stands
 A tomb, and in it lies our Ilyich,
 There lies Lenin in his coffin
 Watching all our happiness.
 We need fear no danger nigh;
 There our comrade watches on.

Of course the mere fact that the singer has so poor a reason for her fearlessness is a sign of danger. There is actual risk of a new religion arising in such emotions, with a new set of superstitions. Judging by her song she feels exactly as the singers of lullabies felt in the earlier and healthier period of Christian civilization. But even that is a better expression of maternal feeling than death-songs and toy-songs. It is, anyhow, the expression of a good reality.

I do not know if Lazareva is herself a worker in a factory; but there at any rate we have a song which in Soviet Russia is presumed to be natural as coming from a woman so employed. Nobody who has seen a Soviet crèche can deny that the child and the madonna are persons of special care.

MUSIC AND LABOUR

Conditions of life in which ordinary people had initiative caused them to make music as they worked, and music in celebration of work they had accomplished. Christian civilization, being developed without reference to the general welfare, made an end of such music.

The spring sowing and the harvest home, for which agricultural labourers had made many a song, have had official celebrations in forms of choral Mass and Te Deum; and we cannot doubt that the various stages of progress and reaction in regard to the common cause affected the degree in which the people themselves shared in the public festivities and music.

In our day the workers have no kind of share in that sort of thing. The women of the petty *bourgeois* are allowed to decorate churches with flowers at festival times, and that is about all of lay spirit that remains. Apart from a few periodic distributions of alms, blankets, and so on, the workers have as little use for the churches as the church officials for them. And so the priestly profession loses its last function as mystifiers and emotional hypnotizers of the people.

Here, in the village where I live, weeds are growing up round a comparatively new church school, and last Easter Sunday morning a party of visitors attended the church for matins to find only one old man, who, with them, waited for a service that did not happen. That may be all to the good now; but it was not always so.

Time was when the general thanksgiving for the spring sowing was an occasion for general festivity. My grandfather, who was a village innkeeper, himself composed an anthem for such an occasion; and one of his sons made a May-day opera in which a whole village was concerned each year. Such music was not published, may not have been publishable; but I scarcely suppose that those pieces were made under exceptional circumstances, and if not, they afford some indication of how, within living memory, musical activity has been a common thing, in close relation with the routine of people's lives.

In the villages the completely anti-popular nature of our civilization is only now experienced. But for

many a long year professional musicians have been out of touch with the real life and feelings of the people. There was no real natural transition from folk-music to a developed art. What the country-folk did not make for themselves was worth nothing to them. When the creative spirit which produced folk-music was checked by unfair conditions of labour, and then swamped by the echoes of the music-halls, there was no means whereby the masses of the people and professional musicians could effect that interchange of material product and musical expression which was necessary for both.

So England became an unmusical nation! That only means that to succeed in commerce and imperialism the English had to harden their hearts, so that a few of them might fill their pockets and the remainder lose their time for tunes. England led the way in that ignoble work, but the rest of Christendom followed suit as soon as it could. The English were not the only nation to become unmusicalized.

The period when the transition from folk-music to a developed art might most easily have been made in England was during the sixteenth century. English musicians then possessed a technical skill which was equal to any, and in many of their works they showed an understanding of the importance of the folk-art. Tye was not the only composer who lifted the idiom of folk-music into his personal compositions, and many of them amused themselves by writing variations for various instruments on actual folk-tunes. But though their instincts were true enough, their lives were impossible. They were either organists in the service of the Church—that meant that they were either without principle or without security—or they were (superior?) servants in the houses of such wealthy people as happened to be partial to music.

An understanding of the mentality of those composers

can best be reached by means of a subject-analysis of some of their works. I take the madrigals of Byrd and Weelkes and the lute-songs of Dowland in the editions of Dr Fellowes. Those two madrigal-writers I choose as the most serious and most humorous of their time, and Dowland as the chief of lute-song composers.

Here is the result of the analysis :

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Byrd</i>	<i>Weelkes</i>	<i>Dowland</i>
Religion . . .	41	0	4
Morality . . .	16	1	12
Love . . .	37	55	50
Shepherd Songs .	4	6	3
Music . . .	4	5	1
Royalism . . .	2	0	4
War . . .	0	1	0
Death . . .	1	4	4
Amusement . .	4	25	3

Nearly three hundred songs, and not a single one celebrating real work! The only pieces approximately connected with labour are those relating to shepherds and music. The musical expressions are real enough, the shepherd songs entirely unreal. A serious composer like Byrd could set music to words like these :

Come, jolly swains, come let us sit around,
And with blithe carols sullen cares confound.
The shepherd's life is void of strife;
No worldly pleasures distastes our measures.
With free consenting, our minds contenting,
We smiling laugh, while others sigh repenting.

at the very time when real shepherd-life was such that 'the work of a whole year would not supply the (agricultural) labourer with what he could have earned a hundred years earlier with fifteen weeks' labour.'¹

The year 1597 was one of fearful famine. In 1598 Weelkes published his *Ballets and Madrigals to Five Voices*. In that we find the following :

¹ Thorold Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, 15th ed., p. 391.

Sing shepherds after me,
 Our hearts do never disagree.
 No war can spoil us of our store;
 Our wealth is ease, we wish no more.

and other shepherd-fantasies of a similar kind.

Had those composers been in any sort of natural contact with real life their art would prove them to have been monsters. They were not in such contact. They were shut away from the world like church mice or pet monkeys, and as little able to express the realities of their time. That is probably one reason why the galaxy of Elizabethan musical talent produced no genius equivalent to Shakespeare's: they lacked the inspiration he had in his closer contact with the common life of his time.

All that Phillada-and-Corydon business was at best a mere *bourgeois* affectation of rurality. It may even have had relation to the fact that many of the master-class were making fortunes out of the wool trade. It may have been partly motivated by a feeling that, after all, the results of civilization were yielding little satisfaction to those who were controlling it in their own interest. The nineteenth number in Byrd's 1588 set of madrigals expresses such a discontent in some detail. Princes are no better off than herdsmen. Shepherds have to kneel and wait on vain presumptuous men. They are not worried by shipping ventures. They are not squeezed by lawyers; and so on. But those who versified and sang in that way did not take to a real shepherd life. They knew that the real strain was passed on to the labourers.

So servile poets and musicians sang the sad songs of master-life and the pleasant lies of peasant-life, and encouraged the employers in their wrongdoing.

More honourable to the madrigalians were their songs in praise of their own craft. When Byrd sang of the necessity to 'compassionate his voice' because of

'sourest sharps and uncouth flats'; when Weelkes impaled the *bourgeois* Philistine in

A sparrow-hawk did hold in wicked jail
Music's sweet chorister, the nightingale;
To whom with sighs she said 'O set me free,
And in my song I'll praise no bird but thee.'
The hawk replied 'I will not lose my diet
To let a thousand such enjoy their quiet.'

they were obviously expressing experiences of their real lives. None the less did the hawk-gentry keep a tight hold on the nightingale-composers; and they have retained that hold to this day. However, such pieces indicate a cautious protest by the musicians against their servile position.

On the other hand, the reduction of musical expression to an interest in musical art, is a sign of the later inbreeding which has weakened music and made it 'romantic.' Notwithstanding the immaterial nature of the art, music needs the cross-fertilization of real life to keep it vigorous. But from the time of Byrd to the time of Wagner—with one small but notable exception—the only ideas which can be said to have kept music in some sort of relation to labour have been those advanced by the Elizabethans: the musician's love for his own art, and a varying idealization of country-life.

The one exception was Bach's little Peasant Cantata, which reveals country-life in a happy humorous style, but without idealization. In that work are the real, cunning, servile, overtaxed, tavern-resorting peasants of Christian civilization.

Haydn's Seasons offers an entirely romantic conception of country-life. What interested the composer was evidently not the life itself, but his own amusing descriptive inventions.

With such trifling Beethoven had nothing to do. His awareness of country-life consisted in the personal joy and revitalization he got from the forces of nature.

state-socialism. Accordingly he leapt at once to those parts of *The Ring* which can be most clearly related to state-socialism and decided that the end of Siegfried and *The Dusk of the Gods* had nothing to do with the case, but were mere operas. As I view the whole work from a rather different angle, I propose not to quote Shaw's interpretations. It will nevertheless be obvious that I owe my understanding of *The Ring* to Shaw.

Wagner's work treats of the human forces, not the human personages, of capitalist civilization. He naturally ignored the persons involved, they being accidental agents, not villains and heroes. The figures in the drama stand for the emotional and intellectual conflict which permeates the economic world of to-day. Though not a realistic drama of Mr Norman the banker and Mr Trotsky the organizer of the Red Army, it is a drama of the same human interests which have moved those men in their work.

Wotan, Loge, Fricka, and the rest of the gods are the superior people who seem to run the world in their own interest. Though they have a very real interest in running it for so long as they can, their management gives them little satisfaction. That is because in a capitalist system they have to ally themselves with creatures who have renounced the beauty of the world for the sake of financial intrigue.

Lord Snowden is reported to have said that the British Labour Party were unfit to govern because they were never able 'to take a wink.' Accepting that very fair description of the governmental methods which prevail in the decadence of capitalist civilization, we recognize in one-eyed Wotan the type of a perfect prime minister, with a permanent wink. He is by nature rather a decent sort of person; but he could succeed in his position of power only by allying himself with the financial interests typified by Alberich.

None the less does Wotan despise the whole business, and his favourite child is Brunnhilda, who is in revolt against the abominable conditions resulting from the alliance between money and power. Mrs Despard and many another well-born woman are of the Brunnhilda sort. Such women, having had less to do with the dirty work of capitalism than their men-folk, have preserved a larger part of their natural freedom of mind.

The love of political power is not in itself a bad thing; it is probably an indication of a natural gift for government. It only becomes an evil thing when conditions of life are such that positions of power are associated with opportunities for unequal personal advantage.

The vow of poverty taken by clerical officials of the medieval Catholic Church was probably connected with the fact that the Church was at one time in fierce opposition to usury, the peculiar mode of capitalist acquisitiveness. Obvious and continuous poverty was the best assurance that the clerics, in their influential positions, were not in secret league with the enemy. For the real political genius, as for any other sort, poverty is a small thing if only security for his work may be ensured. That is, of course, practically impossible in a capitalist state, where security for any kind of work can only be won by using the methods of capitalism itself.

A rather more sensible method of discipline in regard to positions of power has obtained in Soviet Russia. Money is still used; but an effort to dissociate wealth and power has been made by means of a maximum wage for communists, and, in some cases, by paying them less than they would receive were they non-communists. In times of scarcity, however, the communists, upon whom the state depended, have received prior consideration in matters of necessity.

The popular nature of the Catholic Church came to an end from the time when the moneyed Guelph gang got the papacy linked up with their own financial interests. The aristocratic Ghibellines despised the Guelphs for the same reason that Wotan despised Alberich. To the aristocrat it seemed a mean thing to get by cash-payment what could be seized at the point of a sword.

So much for Wagner's outstanding boss-class character, and his typical cold-blooded financier.

In Mime he offered a type of the trading petty *bourgeois*. This is the sort that sneaks benefit from the activities of others. In days of peace he sneaks a middleman's profits. In days of strife he tries to sneak the benefits of a revolution he is unable to make for himself, by swaying from a pretended sympathy for, to a betrayal of, the real revolutionaries. That is the relation between Mime and Siegfried.

Siegfried forged the sword called Need, the only weapon which can effect revolution. By this and other details of his conception it is clear that Wagner's ideas were very near to those of Marx. Wagner *felt* the forces of capitalist climax and downfall as he jostled against them in the dark world of the emotions; Marx arrayed and labelled those forces in the daylight of the intellect. It is only when the Need of the world is forged anew in the hands of revolutionary leadership, as the chaotic needs of the Russian people were forged into a single swordpoint by the fearless, tireless zeal of Lenin, that the opportunity comes for the building of completely new conditions of life.

Incidentally let it be noted that Siegfried's forging-songs are the finest examples of real labour music in modern life. The weapon being welded is to free men from the very civilization in which they have been unable to make music in association with work.

The Nibelung dwarfs stand for the wage-slaves of

civilization; the giants Fasolt and Fafner for the mass-power of the working-class. Although brothers the giants are opposed, as the working-class has been divided into two groups—one with an indifferent acceptance of their conditions so long as life is at all possible; the other group believing that there is a way to better conditions in the capture of capitalist civilization itself. The simpleton is outwitted by his brother who, having captured the money-symbol of the world's wealth, proceeds to sit upon it. It is an addled egg. This part of the work is in effect an exposure of the trades-unionists who believe that the way to freedom is to take over the decayed world of capitalism.

According to Wagner, it is that very idea, that the capitalist system can be seized and reformed, which has first to be ended. Fafner embodies the idea of a money-system which has been taken over by the organized workers, only to find that it is no longer productive. The Nibelung wage-slaves remain in their slavery. The socialized capitalism represented by Fafner becomes an ugly dragon which Siegfried has to kill.

Having killed Fafner, Siegfried becomes master of his wealth; but he refuses to abolish the cash-basis of life, so he is easily cheated and destroyed by Hagen, the counter-revolutionary. All the capitalist paraphernalia foolishly despised by Siegfried at the revolutionary crisis, are revived and used by Hagen for Siegfried's destruction: political marriage, superstitious conceptions of honour, military power, and capitalist cunning are combined against him. Hagen is able to use them simply because, retaining gold as a currency, and the tarn-helm stock-and-share trickery which accompanies money, a direct conception of the natural forces and relationships of life is obscured.

Siegfried acts throughout *The Dusk of the Gods*,

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Incidentally let it be noted that Siegfried's forging-songs are the finest examples of real labour music in modern life. The weapon being welded is to free men from the very civilization in which they have been unable to make music in association with work.

The Nibelung dwarfs stand for the wage-slaves of

civilization; the giants Fasolt and Fafner for the mass-power of the working-class. Although brothers the giants are opposed, as the working-class has been divided into two groups—one with an indifferent acceptance of their conditions so long as life is at all possible; the other group believing that there is a way to better conditions in the capture of capitalist civilization itself. The simpleton is outwitted by his brother who, having captured the money-symbol of the world's wealth, proceeds to sit upon it. It is an addled egg. This part of the work is in effect an exposure of the trades-unionists who believe that the way to freedom is to take over the decayed world of capitalism.

According to Wagner, it is that very idea, that the capitalist system can be seized and reformed, which has first to be ended. Fafner embodies the idea of a money-system which has been taken over by the organized workers, only to find that it is no longer productive. The Nibelung wage-slaves remain in their slavery. The socialized capitalism represented by Fafner becomes an ugly dragon which Siegfried has to kill.

Having killed Fafner, Siegfried becomes master of his wealth; but he refuses to abolish the cash-basis of life, so he is easily cheated and destroyed by Hagen, the counter-revolutionary. All the capitalist paraphernalia foolishly despised by Siegfried at the revolutionary crisis, are revived and used by Hagen for Siegfried's destruction: political marriage, superstitious conceptions of honour, military power, and capitalist cunning are combined against him. Hagen is able to use them simply because, retaining gold as a currency, and the tarn-helm stock-and-share trickery which accompanies money, a direct conception of the natural forces and relationships of life is obscured.

Siegfried acts throughout *The Dusk of the Gods*,

not as a hero, but as a tied man, bewildered into doing things which as revolutionary leader he would have scorned. Part of his bewilderment is due to the conflict between his natural sexual desires and his political marriage; but the root of his post-revolutionary weakness was planted in the idea that the cash basis of life was worth retaining.

But Wagner was evidently unwilling to give an impression of the final victory of counter-revolution. It was impossible for him to detail the last stage in the passage from state-socialism to communism, though state-socialism he could imagine more fully, for its elements were evolving before his eyes. He had not even the knowledge we have of the failure of money-currency in the breakdown of capitalism, though Fafner guarding his hoard is very like existing international conditions in regard to gold. But the tarn-helm even more than the ring is the symbol of later capitalist finance. The fact that in the final stage of our civilization gold has gone out of circulation, and its place been taken by paper and credit (controlled strictly in the interests of the controllers) seems to some socialistic minds a kind of progress. It is—downhill. By means of paper currency and tarn-helm jugglery the governed people can be much more easily swindled, whether their governors are financiers or trades-union bosses.

So long as gold ran there was a limit to possible inflation, a limit to international deals in favour of the master-class. Now there is no limit to it; and judging by the world-politics of recent years, Wagner's intuition revealed a more desirable revolutionary attitude in regard to money than Shaw has been willing to recognize.

Wagner concluded his tetralogy by returning the gold to the Rhine and dissolving his gods into rainbow-mist. That his final settlement was caused, not by a

hero, but by a woman of the old aristocracy, does not alter the significance of the climax. Many leading revolutionaries have been aristocrats, including Lenin himself; and there is no unlikelihood of the leadership of the culminating world-revolution falling to a woman—or, anyhow, to women as well as men.

In view of that significant ending it is difficult to understand Shaw's refusal to admit the last chapters of *The Ring* to his authorization of the Wagnerian scriptures, unless it is his state-socialist tidiness which boggles at a world of proletarian experiment.

His additional explanations in the German translation of *The Perfect Wagnerite*, incorporated in the third English edition, showed that he was not quite happy in his suggestion that an artist of Wagner's sort would have troubled to set the libretto of *The Dusk of the Gods* to music merely because he had made the poem, if it were not essential to the fulfilment of his drama. At various times during his career Wagner wrote librettos which he did not set to music.

Shaw may fairly point to the summary, undetailed ending of the work, partly due to the fact that Wagner actually excised some of the original libretto which would have given a misleading idea of the drama—the whole having gradually grown from within him as he had worked backwards in his original mood of conception; but it is hard to see how the fourth drama can be excluded from the complete scheme unless to give an idea that state-socialism on a cash basis is the best kind of social life. And indeed in his most elaborate economic work Shaw says that money and banking are 'necessities of civilization,' without also saying or suggesting that civilization itself is an evil thing.¹

¹ *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, pp. 264 *et seq.* Note that Shaw appeals in that book to Wagner's ultimate revolutionary, Brunnhilda, and not to Fafner (who, in the organizations of the Second International and its affiliated bodies, Labour Parties, Trades-Unionists, Social Democrats, etc., is already a dead bogey); not to Wotan, still

Ruskin believed that the proper function of gold was indicated by its softness, its suitability for the art of the goldsmith. Thomas More, at the turning-point of Christian civilization, thought it more suitable for turning into chamber-pots than for a currency. Wagner, handing it back to the simple-minded Rhine-maidens, typical lovers of pretty things, seems to have had a similar thought to Ruskin's.

Wagner's Ring of the Nibelungs is an example of what great form music might take in relation to labour and human achievement. Machinery made an end of labour songs; but the enormous leisure which the introduction of machinery might have given, had not the question of profit supervened, would have enabled men and women to develop their musical and general mental capacity so that the loss of their old music would not have mattered. The old songs would not have been adequate for such a development.

Since Wagner's time, however, the progress of capitalist civilization has intensified the evil application of mechanical inventions. The Ring itself, if not actually allegorical in the original intention of the composer, has been so little recognized for what it portends, that wealthy capitalist audiences at the great opera-houses of Western Europe and America acclaim the work, while in communistic Russia, where it might have been produced with open regard to its meaning, it is neglected.

less to Donner or Loge. Shaw's scorn of Fabian-democracy seems inconsistent with his past teaching; but his Fabian friends are themselves exposed for dead bogies, so far as socialism is concerned. Webb and Olivier are with Wotan in the House of Lords. Harold Cox is with Hagen in the columns of *The Sunday Times*. Shaw should admit a mistake here. But has he ever acknowledged himself to be wrong? He has sometimes admitted a mistake by stating its opposite. Thus he went to Italy and wrote a Hagen-fascist play. But he afterwards went to Russia and wrote a Siegfried-communist play. *Too True to be Good* offsets the *Apple Cart*. The implications of both cannot be right, and we may fairly take the later work to represent his modified opinion.

Meanwhile, as musical skill itself grows more mechanical, the art is devoted to baser purposes.

Stravinsky's 'Sacré du Printemps' has great distinction. It expresses country-life and work in a way which no composer had previously thought to record in music.

It was as composer for the Imperial Ballet of Czarist Russia that Stravinsky came into prominence. Russia was then an extremely religious country, where the people were treated with rigour and cruelty; where conspicuous theoretical and practical Christians like Tolstoy and the Dobokors were excommunicated by the Russian Church for insisting on the reality of Christian doctrine; where political and priestly blackguards and fools worked hand in hand; where lavish luxury among the master-class accompanied such exceeding poverty and degradation among the peasants that anti-communists refuse to believe that the comparative post-revolutionary poverty has not been a positive evil, instead of an improvement on the previous conditions, and a positive good in so far as the workers now have some control of their own destinies.

Extreme poverty and persistent cruelty, then, for the masses of the Russian workers, and for the ruling-class the hardness of heart which cruel master-habits necessarily engender, much luxury to enervate their spirits, and such a general blasting of the mental life that it became possible for a creature like Rasputin to assume chief leadership at court.

Under such conditions music is the safest refuge of an embarrassed intelligenzia. Literature, painting, and law must either express subservience or be dangerous to their representatives. Even scientists must carry on with a troubled conscience. But music is apparently so vague, so meaningless, that a man may perhaps be true to himself in that language, and yet not go in any peril.

Mrs Rosa Newmarch, in her book on the Russian Opera, said that the history of Russian music 'like that of most popular movements in Russia, has its aspects of oppression and conflict with authority.' That may have been so when music was associated with words and ideas; but it is clear that the general tendencies of Glinka, Tschaikovsky, and other Russian composers were romantic rather than realistic. Their art provided them with a dream-world in which they could respect themselves, instead of a real world in which self-respect involved revolutionary connections.

But in any case they were eventually involved in the patronage of the only people who could afford the luxury of the arts. The Imperial Ballet represented the climax, at once splendid and disgraceful, of their work. But that ballet expressed a good deal more than the decadence of Christianity in Russia.

Capitalists have learned the secret of internationalism to a much greater extent than have communists, and the success of the Russian Ballet in Western Europe signified a good deal more than the Western appreciation of an exotic art. Friendship with the Czar, his following, and their finance, was insisted upon by the rulers of England and France, in open opposition to the will of the English and French people. The Russian Ballet was the perfect and extravagant expression of a mentality which existed in London and Paris as well as in St Petersburg—to say nothing of Berlin, Vienna, and New York.

In the Russian Ballet colour, movement, sound, and human beauty were massed in a crude extravagance which in Western Europe had only been achieved in the cheaper realm of musical comedy. The impulses which created musical comedy were glorified in the Russian Ballet by the distinction of some of the music, and by a sense of choreographic ensemble which western dancing, in its worship of solo personalities,

had either forgotten or perhaps never known except in folk-dances.

The Russian Ballet music, as it was first heard here, had links with the romantic traditions of Western musical art. Its real energy it owed to its associations with the folk-dances of Russia itself. From the time it became an international thing its Russian associations weakened, and as a rootless activity it became the prey of the boredom and cynicism which pervaded the class which kept it going.

The composer who had had the greatest influence on modern Russian musicians was Liszt. His amalgam of gaudiness and religiosity offered just the mixture which appealed to the Russians. Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky, and Prokoviev have but carried on Lisztian methods with increasing disregard for the larger life whence even Liszt drew a certain succulence.

Rimsky-Korsakov was one of a group of composers who had been consciously national in their outlook, and had naturally turned to folk-music for support, both in subject-matter and music. Korsakov took the glitter from Liszt's orchestration and intensified it. In his hands it became an expressive, though it remained a childish, thing. In the hands of his followers it lost its childlike quality; the glitter became a metallic decking of what was savage and hard in the Russian imagination.

I now intend to treat Stravinsky's most notorious work in some detail.

As Stravinsky has become a European figure he represents something pertaining to the whole of Christian civilization.

Among musicians who affect a modernist outlook Stravinsky and Prokoviev are often bracketed with Schoenberg, Hindemith, and other German musical writers. That is unfair to the Germans. Hindemith expresses careless energy without objective. Schoenberg

merely drains the dregs of the delicate drink first brewed by Debussy, then mixed in cocktails by Scriabine and others. Theirs is the art of the exquisite but sincere *poseur*. Stravinsky stands for a much more brutal force. It is his vodka which has gone to the heads of the young men. Let us then examine his most notorious work—the work which was received with such a mixture of hatred and applause that unmusical people came to the conclusion that the musical world must have discovered a really great man. In so far as greatness is proved by representativeness we may treat Stravinsky as great.

The first part of 'Le Sacré du Printemps' is called Kiss the Earth—Earth Worship.

A passionate adoration of the soil is supposed to have been a ruling characteristic of Russian peasant mentality. I have heard English agricultural labourers praising good soil with the words 'I could eat it.' But it suited the purpose of the ruling-class in Holy Czarist Russia to pretend that the Russian peasant had a peculiarly religious attitude to his bit of land.

Let us examine Stravinsky's music with the idea of discovering what he has expressed of real peasant feeling.

'Sacré' opens with an introduction which is rhythmically rambling and thematically dull. As it was written for an already bored audience, which may not have been fully settled in their seats, we recognize Stravinsky's greatness in giving them exactly the sort of expression which suited them.

At the rise of the curtain there is a dance of adolescents called Springtime Auguries. The title leads us to expect a music which shall reveal something of the wonder and joy of life as it is experienced by young things. What we actually hear is—as to its outstanding idea—a dissonance which is repeated two-hundred-and-twelve times. Its actual effect is rather like the

noise of a steam-engine moving out of a station. That is not a gibe, but the nearest description I am able to give of the particular sound. Do young Russian boys and girls feel like that when they are come to puberty? Is that the response of young Russian peasants to the melting of the snows? Is it the expression of mentalities which have been brutalized by religion and cruelty? Or is it only the expression of Stravinsky's personal outlook?

The rhythms of the most primitive music of savages are characterised by vagueness on the one hand and monotony on the other. We have already in the first pages of 'Sacré' found just those two characteristics. With the full resources of the modern city-orchestra Stravinsky managed to effect what the savage got from drums only. The æsthetic advance is represented by quantity. It is the difference between being excited or bored (according to the receptive nature of the auditor) by a repetition of rifle shots and a series of explosions from Big Berthas.

Stravinsky's melodic ideas are nearly as crude, and much less interesting, than the simplest tunes of savages. By carefully combining his material with a deliberate disregard for that euphony, in the attainment of which musicians used to show their skill, Stravinsky makes an impression of novelty.

Novelty has always been the goal of an art worker who has no sense of originality.

The adolescents' dance is followed by a Game of Abduction, translated 'Jeu du Rapt' in the published score. The emotional response drawn from the hearer by this music, in my own experience and observation, has had nothing to do with peasant love; but it can very fairly be regarded as the expression of some of the young men and girls of our big cities, especially of the emotions they have experienced at times of relief from

intolerable strain. There was plenty of Stravinsky's 'Jeu du Rapt' in London on the evening of November the eleventh, 1918. The scrambling, noisy, ugly thronging of Stravinsky's notes reproduces something of that bewildered uncontrol. For the real thing he pretended to express we have to look back at the gay and tender Hopi love-dance quoted on p. 18.

Primitive emotions are things which give vitality to our mental life; but we have been led to believe that, with the extension of civilization, those emotions have been guided, subtilized, and ennobled, so that they have helped to increase the joy of life. How many young people have been made more joyful by their mafficking experiences?

Stravinsky would apparently have us believe that this chaotic noise expresses the kiss given to Mother Earth by the worshipping Russian peasant. What it really expresses is Stravinsky's own ignorance of, perhaps contempt for, the earth—the sort of primitive embrace imaginable by a man-about-town, with concrete slabs under his feet instead of turf or ploughed land. His music will do for Bright Young Things, but not for the simpler and more casual loves of peasants.

Voronov offers us a monkey-gland future. Perhaps Stravinsky has found the right music for it. Its pathetic gibbering inability to become human certainly seems to bear relation to a simian past. So again I suggest that this music-monger is a more important figure than might have been imagined. He may peddle rotten music, but at least it is as typical of the final decadence of a people as bushmen's music was of primitive life. The differences seem to be quantitative rather than psychological. Stravinsky is more extravagant than the savage was.

Musically, the work is stuck in the bog from which the poor pedlar seems unable to emerge, unless he borrows a stick in the form of a Russian folk-tune, or a

real phrase from Pergolesi or some other second-rate composer. The actual notes of the second part of 'Sacré' are different from the notes of the first part; but the method and results are the same. The same monotony or vagueness, the same displacement of tone and accent. The same prevailing conception that music is the art of disorder.

This second part might have been considered at the end of the section dealing with the Christian Mass, for to that its emotions are related in an inverted way. Here again we have the sacrifice of a victim whose death will result in a better time for those who believe in that sort of thing. Instead of the all-prevailing euphony of Palestrina we have an all-prevailing cacaphony. Instead of the white magic of faith and hope we have the black magic of hysteria, pessimism, and cruelty.

Black magic is apparently a mystical rite for people who have strong emotions and no faith in life. The secretions of their reins and thyroid glands stimulate their imagination, but their higher brain centres have become blind alleys. They have no social cause to serve. Thus, human passions which normally stimulate people in their social activities become concentrated, jammed, hysterical, and purposeless. Then happens this sort of thing:

'A scholar of distinction told me that he had been recently concerned with a cult of magic ritualists in London. He was offered a large fee to provide the requisite Sanscrit incantations, and to bring the fruit of his classical knowledge and occult researches to bear on the celebrations of the degenerates who formed the cult. . . . In the course of his connection with one of the London cults, he attended a Black Mass in Bloomsbury recently. . . . Men and women rose up with animal cries, there was a screaming stampede, and then the true reason for all this became apparent. The rest is too abominable for description.'¹

¹ From the *Morning Post* of 19th January 1931.

In that Black Mass a bull-roarer was the chief instrument of noise, while a chant was uttered in English, Latin, and gibberish—the theologic dialect of the Black Mass. On the altar of the devotees was an image of the devil.

As I read that description I seemed to be reading an analysis of the second part of 'Sacré du Printemps.' The animal cries, the screaming stampede, the primitive sexual and sacrificial rite, the use of savage noises instead of music, are common to both.

One of the movements of this second part is known as 'Glorification de l'Elue.' The Russian title has been literally translated for me as the 'Glorification of Select Society.' And it is the self-glorification of young wealthy people which brings them to a life in which their chances of education result in no capacity for leadership. It is in the glorification of art that young artists come to believe in such a work as 'Sacré,' while their statement of faith and understanding in such a work causes them to believe that they are of the æsthetic elect. But the glorification of the elect is the denial of life itself at the moment of gravest social decadence. To glorify the chosen at the very time when the chosen are incapable of sacrifice—self-sacrifice—is really the glorification of the damned. The Black Mass is evidently a kind of mental suicide. 'Sacré' and all such modernist rot are works of æsthetic suicide. With such works physical suicide may easily be associated.

'Two young people, well known to New York and Boston society, were found dead yesterday evening as a result of a suicide compact. They are —, the modernist poet, and Mrs — of Boston.'¹

The end of a modernist 'Jeu du Rapt!'

Is it not time we were all more honest about this rubbish which poses as 'art,' and is nothing

¹ *Morning Post*, 12th December 1929.

but the expression of people without purpose or sincerity?

Stravinsky's contribution to it all has been well described by his fellow-countryman, Sabaneyev:

Stravinsky's fame is based not only on his musical gift (who measured it? and hard it is to measure it; perhaps it is not so great after all), but chiefly on his virtuosity in making full use of musical conditions and taking full account of fashions and fads, these two wavering and changing elements on which, nevertheless, fame in one's lifetime almost exclusively depends. It depends least of all on the magnitude of endowments, but more on the composer's technical and even commercial experience. Stravinsky is immeasurably more a genius of musical business, rather than purely of music.¹

Stravinsky was cunning enough to know what kind of ballet would astonish a faithless people; cunning enough to realize that, if he were extravagant enough, his barren musical mentality would be overlooked in the notoriety he would provoke. So he proceeded to make noises which combine the ineptitudes of the savage with the extravagance which has always characterised decadent civilizations.

What are his rhythms but a banjo-thrumming disguised by arbitrary accents unequally marked, or by putting in his bar-lines at unequal distances, on the plan of the child's blindfold game in which an eye has to be put on a paper pig! Sometimes in his thematic lines he uses a folkish phrase, and then to show his greatness he smudges it with other sound, as a baby might scribble over a figure drawn by an older child. His polyphony, being entirely disordered, gives the effect of a rude company of people talking, or generally screaming, against each other. His harmony, affectedly ignoring the natural concords which no real composer has ever been able to do without, ignores the very thing which gives effect and significance to discord. The wasteful tissue of his orchestration is like a shopful

¹ *Modern Russian Composers*, by Leonid Sabaneyev.

of unrelated metals and colour-stuffs. It does not matter whether the players play the notes he has written or other notes. In fact, orchestral players often lark about in such music. The boss-shots which occur in the performance of such music do not matter; no one is aware of them—not even the composers. Experienced musicians have their fingers to their noses on such occasions. It is only very young, inexperienced and ignorant folk who are dared or cowed into looking knowing and solemn, and afterwards to shout their hollow applause and write drivel in the press about it all.

Of the statements I have just made no one can deny the technical ones. The last sentence follows from them.

As Stravinsky's stuff is the special result of the kind of civilization rampant in Russia before the war and now spreading through Europe, so all modernist musical imposturing is one of the results of the breakdown of Christian civilization.

Czarist Russia produced great men like Tolstoy and Kropotkin; but their work expressed opposition to the kind of life in which they were born. Smaller men continue in such circumstances in comparative ease, and proved themselves with the dream-life of romantic art. Completely contemptible men are willing to express and extend that moral breakdown, and batten on it.

Stravinsky's vogue, which in certain directions has amounted to a pretended worship of great genius, has by less foolish and credulous musicians been ascribed to the idea that great composers have in the past failed of proper contemporary recognition because of the strangeness of their art; so some idiots have recognized this man because of his strangeness. Sabaneyev even proposes that the contemporary recognition of a real composer partly depends on his ability to take 'full

account of fashions and fads.' That idea has less basis in fact, I think, than has been believed.

All great composers have produced a music which has had obvious connection with the music of their predecessors, especially of their immediate predecessors. By their earlier critics they have been more liable to be charged with imitation than with novelty. Great artists naturally have their roots in the past, and the immediate past is easily recognizable. Bach wrote as the most skilful of a long line of polyphonists; his works were so like the works of others that some of their pieces have been credited to him. Beethoven carried on the style previously fostered by Haydn and Mozart; Mozart's Piano Fantasia in C minor has more of a Beethovenish ring than some of the later master's own works, while several of Beethoven's finales budded straight from Haydn's stem. Wagner's early work was like some of Weber's and Mendelssohn's; the likeness was noticed at the time by Schumann.

From what stem can Stravinsky be said to have sprung? It is true that he copied in a clumsy and vulgar way the tricks of Korsakov. But where is a work of Stravinsky which has the simple directness of his Russian master? It is only in orchestral colouring that he derives; and that he does not develop but destroys.

Where is there sign of growth in his own work? Real composers, even of lesser stature, develop something of their predecessors' detail and style. Great masters extend the art of their predecessors in their will to express their own fuller revelation of life and human nature. The Russian blunderer stands where he stood, compounding raucous noises, dull rhythms set awry, inane themes, and irrelevant dissonances.

The study of dissonance during the history of music offers the student a most interesting field for real

discovery in the realm of musical æsthetic—discovery which would also shed light on the cognate fields of linear involution and colour-clash. Here there is space only to touch its elementary aspect.

Music differs from noise in the regular and irregular recurrence of air-waves. Music is made up of regular aerial rhythms. Noise results from sound waves which have no rhythmical relationship. So, when the adolescents in 'Sacr  ' have a music which sounds like a steam-engine it shows that the author has gone out of his way to make noise and not music.

Where has he shown any capacity to make a tune, or move our sense to a fresh conception of beauty, however trifling? A man who cannot make a tune is unlikely to be able to make anything in music, for it is in the tune that the first dividual formative musical instinct is declared.

A music-dealer who can do none of those things has no justification for dabbling with the art. Justification is not proved by treating the ears of his listeners with such brutality that their very amazement causes them to hesitate before pronouncing judgement.

Dynamic assault may cow if it cannot convince. Of that the modern world has experience in politics as well as in the arts; and in the arts it is as dangerous to the general intellectual life as in the physical life it is uncomfortable to the body.

But, argues the puzzled amateur, surely the mere fact that so many well-known musicians admire Stravinsky proves that there is something in his music? And then the reader's attention may be drawn to the fact that Stravinsky's work has not had a word of real approval from any musician whose own music is rooted in the past—the only sort of musician who has any right to give judgement. Haydn could recognize the greater genius of Mozart, and Schumann of Brahms, because each forerunner had been so trained that he

was able to recognize the signs of greatness. Stravinsky's 'greatness' has been recognized only by business men and half-baked younglings.

Nor has Stravinsky's work received the hall-mark of amateur enjoyment. The creative artist devotes his skill and sympathy to the expression of ideas which arise in the life of his time. The amateur decides whether the art-work is of any use to him. The pleasure many of us got from 'The Fire-bird' and 'Petrouchka' was only in a very slight degree due to the music. Some sort of rhythmic noise had to accompany the otherwise silent show, as some sort of music had to accompany the movies. And so the man rode to notoriety on the backs of the Russian Ballet.

What has made Stravinsky to loom large in the musical world has been the very thing which caused Beethoven and Wagner to fail of contemporary appreciation at certain periods and in certain places—namely, the intrigue of business interests.

Sabaneyev is quite right in saying that 'Stravinsky is immeasurably more a genius of musical business, rather than purely of music.' His association with the Russian Ballet involved a capitalist interest in his scores. The collapse of the Russian Empire left the Ballet without its base, and entirely at the mercy of the fad-and-fashion public. Their interest had to be stimulated by all sorts of commercial dodges, by provoking their curiosity, and by making them feel that if they had not seen or heard a thing they were intellectual and even social outsiders. They must be given something to talk about over their tea-cups and cocktails. Even so there is a short limit to their fidelity; but if the musical public could be led to believe that if only they tried hard enough this very 'difficult' kind of art would presently offer them a new world of delight—then a longer period of commercial value was assured.

The gradual failure of the Russian Ballet was leaving Stravinsky high and dry. Then we had all the nonsense of his having been a composer of 'absolute' music from the beginning, of a score in the style of Mozart, and so on. All commercial bunk!

Commercial interest to-day controls even a large part of the æsthetic opinions expressed in the press. Considerable business organizations have their publicity departments. 'Information' is constantly sent to the newspapers from those departments, and some of it is printed, especially when the businesses concerned advertise in the papers. The consequence is that many readers' minds are affected, temporarily anyhow, by those who have a financial interest in their favourable opinions.

When the tremendous influence of the press is coupled with the favour of the fad-and-fashion crowd, it needs something more than the reserve and contempt of the few musicians who have a capacity for judgement, if young and eager people are to be prevented from wasting their time wrestling with a thing which is not worth a second thought. Indeed the more vacuous it is, the more it may seem to be withholding some precious secret, unless previous experience enables a man to recognize the difference between the reserve of a deep mind and the cunning of an empty mind. So our young people continue to follow—not the paths indicated by the last great master, Wagner, nor even the paths indicated by such true composers as Brahms, Franck, Elgar; but the bogs and empty alleys which take them farther and farther from the real world where only real music, real art of any kind, can be made.

And when those same young and eager people become officials of the British Broadcasting Corporation the evil is much increased. We get those many programmes which the great public hates, even though critics are engaged to prime them beforehand. And

because the uninformed public is led to believe that such rubbish is a true modern development of what used to be called 'classical,' any true modern musical development is bound to meet with extra difficulties. That is easily to be proved in the matter of dissonance.

Real music composed to-day is almost certain to contain a greater proportion of dissonance than formerly, for two reasons: life itself is fuller of dissonance; and the growth of music has been associated with an increasing complexity in regard to problems which can be associated with the deferred solution of dissonances. All such dissonances mean something very definite. They are at once mathematical and emotional; and they are sometimes dramatic into the bargain. But even when they cannot be easily analysed and explained, they can be quickly and easily felt as apposite to their position and subject-matter.

Now I have known conductors pass over many mistakes in orchestral parts merely because they had been so accustomed to ugly sound that they had lost the logic of the dissonance. And quite recently a foreign composer wrote to congratulate the orchestra of the B.B.C. on a performance as 'the best he had ever heard' of his work, though the work had been incorrectly performed owing to the last-minute engagement of an important artist who could not fairly be expected to discover the logic of a music which had none. Such music must be learned parrotwise; or it cannot be performed at all.

With such powerful influences fostering all this false music, young composers starting their careers, naturally feel it their duty to try something in a similar style. Confining ourselves to music which has been associated with human labour and achievement, we have relevant examples in the Honegger 'Pacific,' and Mossolov's 'The Machines.'

Some excuse may be allowed to Mossolov, because in

Soviet Russia they really have discovered a god in the machine. In the present immature state of communist culture in Russia a musician may with some honour pay tribute to the greater importance of engineers and other workers by implying that his own art is a trivial thing compared with the creative reality of their machines. But a leading London critic welcomed Mossolov's work as opening up new possibilities in music! It opens up no such possibilities. On the musical side it is as infertile as Stravinsky's puffing adolescents. Mossolov's Piano Concerto, a later work, showed that his mechanical imagination was entirely sterile when applied to a formal musical art. The dissonant music of a failing civilization is only significant in the sense that it shows that mental disintegration is a part of the general breakdown. In Soviet Russia such an art can only serve the purpose of counter-revolution.

Malko told me that a young Soviet composer visited Hindemith hoping to get good futurist advice. He was advised to make simple tunes for school-children and the workers of his country—for those who have not been debauched by the romantic art of imperialism, by the delusive art of imperialistic ascendancy, or the false mechanical art of imperialistic decay. School-children and ordinary people cannot fully respond to music which has not a natural basis of beauty and human feeling. The communist music of Russia will arise, not in an ever-narrowing *bourgeois* tradition, but in close relationship with the workers themselves, and probably in their factory clubs where many branches of culture are available for them all.

Not every young Russian is obsessed with the modernist cult. Some are willing to say a simple thing straightforwardly, so that an average person can get something from it. An example of that is Davidenko's song, 'The Blacksmith':

O blacksmith, come close to your fire.
Your body is young,
And your heart it is strong;
Let your forge blossom white with desire.

For when we are troubled,
And when the heart falters
We doubt all our actions;
The joys of the world
Begin to seem stupid;
Then old age is burrowing
Deep in the roots of the will.
Then come to yourself;
In your hand is the hammer;
It needs a new service, O smith!

Melt out all the baser alloy.
Your body is growing,
Your heart it is glowing.
Gold shape into tributes of joy!

Now let us pick up the thread we were stringing with pieces in which the musicians were singing the beauties of their own art.

We saw that Elizabethan composers were deprived of a fair connection with the work of the greater world, and for a true music concerning the activities of human beings were restricted to music about music. I suggested that such a restriction might result in a kind of æsthetic inbreeding. If musicians are chiefly intent on the wonder of music itself, then their inspiration, their conscious application of their subconscious power, would become seriously limited. They would fail of that give-and-take which results from cross-fertilization.

Bach's genius was fertilized with the human passions which had arisen in the Reformation and the counter-reformation which followed it. Beethoven's genius was fertilized with the hopes and disappointments of the French Revolution and its European repercussions. Wagner's genius was fertilized with the European revolutionary movement of 1848, and the growing clashes between the capitalist and working classes.

No mere accident caused those three composers, who were so concerned with ideas external to their art, to increase the expressional powers of music far beyond those others who were merely masters of music, even though, as in the cases of Mozart and Brahms, their sheer musical mastery within traditional limits was equal to the greatest. The three greatest musicians extended the expressive powers of their art beyond the traditional limits. Additional powers were acquired by them, as a result of the fertilization of their minds by a non-musical interest in life. From that resulted an interplay between the world of thought and action on the one hand, and the inner emotional reality of music on the other hand, music having to make responsive growth to express ideas which had not previously been required of it.

As a result of that larger interest in life the most interesting music dealing with music was composed just by those composers whose minds were least bounded by the world of music. Let us consider a few works of that kind.

St Cecilia was the name that stood for the greatness of music in a religious application. She was associated with the church-organ, in which the sounding medium is separated from the performer by various mechanical devices.

Apollo, Orpheus, and Pan have been the names that stood for the greatness of music in a secular application. They were associated with wind and stringed instruments, in which the sounding medium is in direct contact with the performer—harps, pipes, viols.

Though Bach wrote finer music for the organ than any other composer, when he came to make music in praise of itself it was not the saint of the organ, but the pagan gods of the orchestra, whom he invoked.

His problem in Phoebus and Pan was to show whether the simple dance rhythms and tunes of peasant art, or

the elaborate developments of polyphony, were of greater value. Naturally he decided in favour of the art which demanded the fullest use of the human mind. But his songs for Pan the rustic and his supporter are as fine as the others. So we have to understand that, even for the greatest of musicians, the music of the simple people was a thing of great value. What Bach really stated in Phoebus and Pan was, that a great musician does not oppose, but incorporates earlier and lowlier expressions of his art.

Purcell and Handel paid tribute to St Cecilia.

The English master made music in a demoralized age, and looked to his art to relieve the evils of his time. Music, he said, is 'the soul of the world' by means of which that world is tuned to celestial harmony; and the magic is brought about by means of that 'wondrous machine,' the organ. Compared with that machine the warbling lute, the airy violin, the amorous flute and soft guitar, the fife and all the harmony of war, are of small value. The real meaning of the absurd comparison lies in these lines:

Let these among themselves contest
Which can discharge its single duty best.

Purcell's age, like all reactions from greater musical periods, was one in which solo musicians were of undue importance. His praise of the organ, which he significantly called a machine, was due to the fact that by its means he, as a soloist, could enjoy some of the effects which had previously been possible only in communal forms of art. That its mechanical construction did not allow it to utter the first element of music was a comparatively small matter.

Rhythm, after all, is an essentially communal detail, and one which your typical soloist is very ready to ignore.

The amusing thing about it all was that he scored

his work, not for the wondrous machine, but for the instruments which he had depreciated. As organist of Westminster Abbey he knew that his job was to exalt the church saint and the church machine. As artist he wanted his music expressed by instruments which had rhythmic vitality and emotional responsiveness.

Handel had the advantage of a better poem for his 'Ode on St Cecilia.' Dryden's verses touch on the musical (mathematical?) nature of the original creative faculty of life itself—the inevitable response to music of a well-ordered mind. Otherwise he followed a similar plan to that of Purcell's Brady, alluding to various instruments, and then dismissing them in favour of the saintly machine. Handel thereupon introduced the organ itself into his score to give pompous mass to the orchestra he had previously used in the work. And that is the most effective use of the organ—to enter towards the climax of a work and add a background of such volume (not necessarily loudness) that listeners are moved by a purely dynamic force. It is a monstrous music. It serves a similar purpose to that of the bull-roarer which was used to stir the dark and fearful emotions of the savage initiate and the worshippers at the Black Mass of Bloomsbury.

Wagner, in *The Mastersingers*, moved away from the symbolical world of gods and saints, and showed musicians themselves at work. In Beckmesser he characterized the sort of musician who, for art's sake, produces inbred music. Not for Beckmesser the academic art which is made in deference to tradition; but music of which meaningless dissonance is the chief mark. Thus Wagner not only expressed the acidity of Beckmesser's own personal nature; he also exposed the kind of character most apt for irresponsible and unresolving dissonances.

Moreover, Wagner made it clear that it was love of life, not mere love of music, which made his Walther

a song-maker. Walther's technic resulted from a study of the natural laws of music, not from a series of text-book rules. He refused the suggestion that religion should be the subject of his song, and insisted on the secular world for his art.

Other details brought out by Wagner in *The Mastersingers* are the admission that the *bourgeois* life is a mean one, only redeemed in the German case by a love of music;¹ and the vital importance of a music which has real connections with the lives of the common people.²

Among post-Wagnerian composers Elgar and Stravinsky have both written musical works round their own art.

Elgar in *The Music-Makers* takes an exactly opposite standpoint to Wagner's. In the English master's work the musicians are 'world-losers and world-forsakers.'

O men, it must ever be
That we dwell with our dreaming and singing
A little apart from ye.

O'Shaughnessy's poem exalts the art, but at the expense of truth. He says that the workers of the world

had no vision amazing
Of the goodly house they were raising,
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But on one man's soul hath broken
A light that doth not depart.

but we know that the reverse is the case. Professor Petrie has shown how music is the last of the arts to come to its full expression in all civilizations. It is the final exquisite realization of all that is lovely, or the painful retirement of betrayed hope and will. It is the climax, not the stimulus of all; though, once the musical moment of civilization has been reached, the

¹ *Vocal Score*, Schott edition, p. 95.

² *Ibid.*, p. 108 *seq.*

very increase of expression that it affords must result in a renewed stimulation of life—glad life if the communal basis of civilization has been fulfilled; rebellious life if it has been thwarted in lesser measure, sad life if in greater measure.

Now, good music cannot lie. Deeper than our conscious hopes and fears is our subconscious awareness of fact; and as the musician has to rely just on that subconscious wisdom, Elgar's music refused the falsity of the poem.

If O'Shaughnessy's idea had been right it must have carried an exultant music; but it has evoked a wistful music which denies its theme. Moreover, the poet ended on the idea of welcoming the singers of to-day who are to create the world of to-morrow. Elgar wiped out that nonsense by emphasizing the 'dreamer who slumbers, and a singer who sings no more.' No more, no more! he repeats; and he sums it all up by reverting to earlier lines. The feeling the work leaves in our minds is that of Elgar's last vocal phrase: 'We are the dreamers of dreams,' and on the last word is the final emphasis. Again we have a conventual dream-retirement, provoked by the evils of the real world.

Stravinsky's 'Apollo Musagetes' helps us to understand how at the decay of Roman civilization the songs of Apollo caused the Christians to think he must be a devil—the devil they named Apollyon.

MUSIC AND SEX

Because of the unnatural religious opposition to sex which has permeated Christian civilization, musical expressions of sex were comparatively unreal until the reaction from capitalism produced a music of revolt. When we recall the great range of sexual expression in the Greek drama, and compare it with the limited love-intrigue of the drama in Christian civilization,

we can the better understand how similarly limited the expression of its music has been.

Sex was, of course, poisoned by Christianity from the beginning. Jesus never understood it, though at least He knew how to behave decently when one of its problems was laid before Him. But the Church, from the time of Paul onwards, failed to recognize the dividual equality of men and women; so the natural basis of sexual emotion was set awry, and it became at once more domineering and less vital than it ought to have been. As a consequence of that unnatural condition, the proportion of sex-music to music expressing other matters became absurdly increased, though shallow and timid in quality.

We have seen how sex occupied about one-twentieth of the musical interest of the North American Indians; and though it tended to grow personal it remained rooted in a communal and religious atmosphere. In the folk-songs of the British Isles, sex became of greater importance and almost wholly personal, taking about one-seventh of the whole range of expression. The increase in quantity was associated with a development in quality.

When we come to the songs of the Elizabethan madrigalians we find that sexual expression has further increased quantitatively, but in quality has curiously decreased.

Byrd's chief source of inspiration was religious. Nevertheless, his secular love-pieces amount to one-third of his madrigal output. Weelkes wrote no religious madrigals, but sex took the leading place in his inner world, and moved him to more than half of his music. Dowland, a more serious though not a religious composer, found in love five-eighths of his inspiration.

We have only to contrast the verse of these madrigal writers and lutenists with the verse of the Indians and

the British folk-singers to realize the decrease in vital feeling.

Here is a song by an Earl of Oxford, which Byrd set to music :

If women could be fair and never fond,
Or that their beauty might continue still,
I would not marvel though they made men bond
By service long to purchase their goodwill.
But when I see how frail these creatures are
I laugh that men forget themselves so far.

Weelkes's love-pieces are equally cynical; but Weelkes was a gay bird who was prepared to make fun when he could not feel. Here is one of his madrigals :

Some men desire spouses
That come of noble houses,
And some would have in marriage
Ladies of courtly carriage.
Fa la la !
But few desire as I do
The maidenhead of a widow.
Fa la la !

Dowland, though often serious, had not the religious background of Byrd. His love-songs have not the prevailing cynicism of his immediate predecessors; they are more deeply felt. The music of Byrd and Weelkes played with the idea of love. Dowland expressed a real emotion, occasionally happy, more frequently of disillusion :

Daphne was not so chaste as she was changing,
Soon-begun love with hate estranging.
He that to-day triumphs with favours graced
Falls before night with scorns defaced.
Yet is thy beauty feigned, and everyone desires
Still the false light of thy traitorous fires.¹

¹ The emotional parallel between these songs of the Elizabethan decadence and the songs of Meleager and the Greek decadence is marked. Every civilization seems to pass through the same artistic phases.

Those three aspects of sexual feeling have predominated throughout the love-music of Christian civilization. Sex has either been a subject for contempt, as with Byrd; for fun, as with Weelkes; or for sickness, as with Dowland.

If we had to accept the negative sex-philosophy of the Christian religion, those three aspects would exhaust the subject; and to that extent we must credit the Elizabethans with having done their best to express it in the only (emasculated) manner which was possible for them. But the human body and the vitality of the race have, in this particular, laughed Christianity into the nunneries and monasteries where only it belongs. A real music for life means a real music for sex. Sex runs as mystically as religion itself, and much more realistically. Sooner or later it had to find a real music from the mind of a composer in radical revolt against the general absurdity of the civilization in which he found himself.

Meanwhile Purcell followed up the amusing line traced by Weelkes. Purcell was cast among the billy-goats of the Restoration; but his music is naturally so cold that the effect of some of his love-songs is like obscenity from the lips of a saint.

Bach stands out as the one composer who came near to making music for the actual sex-philosophy of Christianity. Dowland hinted at it in his 'traitorous fires'; but Dowland, like the rest of the Elizabethans, was in a state of irritation and emotional reaction against the Christian conception. His idea of the disappointment and treachery of love was too personal to reveal the real opposition between sex and Christianity. Compare the love-music of the English composers with Bach's outstanding piece, 'Amore Traditore,' and we find, not merely the difference between the true small men and the true greater, but also a difference in the reality, the honesty of the feeling.

Byrd had contempt in the words he set, but his music for that contempt is not really different in feeling from his settings of more amiable ideas. Dowland's music is full of reproach for the treachery of love, but his music is the self-pity of one who has had to endure a personal loss. Bach in 'Amore Traditore' expresses a hearty dogmatic contempt for love.

Glück and Handel sweetened their love-music (which scarcely goes deep enough to be called sexual) by means of lovely tunes. Their operas, in which the love-music occurs, was essentially a leisure-class amusement—not the kind of work in which feeling is reinforced by a deeply experienced passion. Their love-tunes could as fitly have been transferred to verses expressing quite different ideas. Theirs was an art which did not belong to real life. It belonged to a world in which the Christian legends were being displaced by legends of other civilizations. The subjective nature of vital activity was being transformed into the objective nature of specialized skill, just as the expressional dances of savages dwindled into exhibition dances during the decadence of savage life. Jesus and Mary Magdalen had meant something real to popular Christianity, something uncomfortable to the decadent Church and the master-class; but to Christians the loves of the Greek gods implied neither religious reproach nor sensual limitation, so Glück and Handel fitted the light love with a music which certainly did not rise from their loins, and everyone who could afford their expensive operatic art was satisfied.

Bach's music, like Glück's and Handel's, is not deeply bound up with the words; but, unlike theirs, the amount of reality expressed by Bach is entirely conformable with the Christian viewpoint. Glück and Handel would have you charmed with their sweet-hearts. Bach is beyond that sort of thing. In one or two wedding cantatas we can feel that the old man's

eyes twinkled; but he had a bigger task on, and he had been taught that the bigger task was not compatible with a full admission of sexual life.

That Bach lived a full sexual life is clear. Not merely in the number of his children, but in his musical relations with his second wife, and the music he wrote for her and his children. There is the evidence that the hormones in his blood invigorated his mind and extended his marital and paternal emotion in works of art. But that those pieces of music, as well as his religious emotions, were actually branching from the same roots as his sexual instincts—that would have been an impossible, perhaps an abominable idea to him. His conscious attitude to sex was revealed in 'Amore Traditore.' The only other music he found for it were in the oblique and sanctified references in the wedding cantatas.

Bach's few examples of love-music in his secular cantatas—for instance the love-duet in 'Der Wahl des Hercules'—are as little sexual as the love-music of Glück and Handel. Indeed, he used the music of that very love-duet in his Christmas Oratorio. The sexual nature of Bach probably found its fullest subconscious expression in the wonderful duets for Jesus and 'the human soul' in certain of his cantatas. That will seem a monstrous idea only to those who, without a qualm, read the Song of Solomon as an allegory of 'Christ's love for the Church.'

There was less obscurity and as much vitality in Mozart's revival of the cynical spirit, because that was at any rate direct and honest as an expression of the loves of the leisure class for whom it was made. Mozart lacked the staminal principle of the three great masters of music; consequently he could not be depended on for a definite development of any single-minded attitude such as we find in their works.

... the works of Bach, from beginning to end, there

is traceable a developing effort to assert communal Christianity in face of a hostile world; and, failing open assertion, the way for secret assertion. In the works of Beethoven it is possible to follow the ever more obvious expression of the communal spirit which at the outset of his career he found wrapt away in mere music. Sex played its part in the works of both those masters, subconsciously in the one, ever more clearly in the works of the other, as we shall see presently. In the works of Wagner sex became a completely conscious force of the greatest importance, eventually approximating to the significance it had in the Greek drama. But this is to anticipate. The point is that in those three masters there was a consistent treatment of sexual emotion.

Setting aside *The Magic Flute*, we find the comedic attitude to sex the chief subject-matter of Mozart's operas; but without any growth of conception. After *Don Giovanni*, in which the philanderer is sent to hell, Mozart wrote *Così fan Tutte*, in which there is a reversion to the cynical attitude of earlier operas. *Don Giovanni* was a real study of a sex maniac defying the silly convention which would have him pretend repentance which he could not possibly feel if he were to fulfil the laws of his being. '*Così*' was merely a frightfully prolonged statement of the leisure-class idea that sex intrigue was the most interesting business of life.

It was Beethoven, the first master to be in continuous musical revolt, who began to realize the renewal of creative power which, in all directions, follows the acceptance of sexual emotion, and its correlation with other realities of life. Not for him the anti-sexual stultification of Christianity. It was not Schubert, but Beethoven who, in his song-cycle, '*An die ferne Geliebte*,' rediscovered the spring of song, and intuitively understood its relation with that other sort of

spring which sets the birds singing and all youth aglow. It was Beethoven who first freed sexual expression from the Christian convent on the one hand, and the prostitution of the opera-stage on the other.

Beethoven's 'An die ferne Geliebte' is a literal statement of that mental by-product of sexual experience which is called sublimation. Orthodox Christianity would have been willing enough to recognize the sublimation, so long as it carried the implication of asceticism, and perhaps imaginative expression can exist to a certain extent in spite of a defrauded body; but the imagination can undoubtedly work much more freely and fully when working through a body which receives a normal satisfaction of its appetites.

Somewhere in Thayer's *Life of Beethoven* we are solemnly informed (I forget whether by the author or the American editor who completed the biography) that Beethoven had had sexual experience. That was the natural man bursting through the shackles of Christianity as he burst through the formality of the conventional sonata.

Beethoven's conscious attitude to sex was even puritanical. That is shown by his treatment of his sister-in-law and nephew. His choice of an opera-libretto shows that, so far as he consciously thought of the matter, his was the repressed nature which is inclined to prudery. He chose a libretto of married life to offset the operatic conventions of sexual intrigue. His 'Fidelio' was in reaction against the 'Infidelio' who had been the chief stage ideal of Mozart.

Genius, however, is not proved in its conscious acts, unless they are reinforced with the powers of sub-consciousness; and 'Fidelio' was not so reinforced. It has neither the dramatic significance nor the emotional depth of the Third and Fifth Symphonies. Great-minded though Beethoven was, his treatment of his naughty sister-in-law and his wildish nephew

were no expression of that greatness. Beethoven's guts and brain were seldom long in real accord. He came at the parting of the ways. The conventions of life and of music were well set around him, and though he seemed to accept them his inwards would have none of them. The conventions of musical form he tore to tatters. The conventions of life were not so easily disposed of; and though he had his own sexual experiences he could not abide the thought of the Magdalen who was his sister-in-law. So it is not in his life, but in his music that we can understand something of his sexual undercurrents. Their clearest and most delightful expression is in the song-cycle. There for one happy moment he came to a partial consciousness of the implications of love:

Will denn nichts mehr zu dir dringen,
Nichts der Liebe Bote sein?
Singen will Ich, Lieder singen,
Die dir klagen meine Pein!
Denn vor Liedesklang entweicht
Jeder Raum und jede Zeit,
Und ein liebend Herz erreicht,
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht.

That is an open recognition of what is the most personal, and among the most mystical, of experiences. The close relation of love to religion had made the Christian priesthood as afraid of women as of devils. Its dried-up seed in the mummied loins of Græco-Roman classicism could not fertilize even the genius of Glück and Handel. The natural, conscious naughtiness of Weelkes, Purcell, and Mozart could do no more than voice the lewd life which results when sex is placed under ban. But Beethoven, despite all his conscious prejudices, was forced by his genius to understand the power of sexual passion to influence human beings creatively in ultra-sexual activities.

He passed the gate where music issues as the spring-song of beast and bird, and penetrated into the deep-

and ultimate nature of love, reaching, in his last symphony, the climax of noble human passion :

Seid umschlungen, Millionen !
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt !

But before he reached that degree of exaltation he had to pass through many a tortured hour. Unhappy love as well as happy love may result in the sublimation of art, though the resultant work will probably be tormented rather than rapturous. There is no doubt that Beethoven's many unhappy loves were the motive-power in some of his most passionate pieces of instrumental music. The tortured elements in them are perhaps explained by his bachelordom.

Wagner's experiences and music corroborate that idea.

Between Wagner and his first wife, Minna, there had been no deep mutual understanding, and the fact is reflected in the quality of the love-music in his earlier operas. His own affectionate nature and vivid imagination gave an average warmth to the music; but that he was conscious of emotional loss in his personal relations we know, not only from his correspondence with Minna, but also from his characterization of Tannhäuser and Lohengrin. In *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman* the unreal, idealistic nature of the love-music is obvious; but in his next two operas we have statements of definite sexual problems.

Tannhäuser is torn between his desire for a full sexual experience which seems to be possible only on a physical plane, and the Christian conventions which offer him the cool, ideal love of Elizabeth. Either solution was unsatisfactory, and the opera had to come to an end with the help of a miracle.

Wagner tried again. Lohengrin seeks to come to terms with Elsa by demanding that she shall take him

on trust, even when his actions violate her sense of right and reason. That clearly was as unsatisfactory to the female as the other alternative had been to the male.

This is not to say that Minna was the prototype of Venus, or Elizabeth or Elsa; but that Wagner's imaginative power, reacting from his unsatisfactory relations with Minna, was seeking a nourishment which it was not in her power to give. His music was still far from reaching the subconscious depths which Beethoven had reached quite early in his career.

It was only through his fulfilled relations with his second wife and his unfulfilled relations with Mathilde Wesendonck that he was enabled completely to vindicate the musical side of his genius; and, of course, the vindication came in 'The Ring' and in 'Tristan and Isolde.'

The love-music for Siegfried and Brunnhilda was entirely rich and happy, penetrating into Siegfried's every action, until he broke the bond by his unnatural political marriage with Gudrune. There was no tragedy in the love-music for those two, even in their deaths, for the simple reason that Wagner's love for Cosima was fully satisfied and penetrated into every department of his life.

The love-music for Tristan and Isolde is tragic for the reason that Wagner's love for Madame Wesendonck was fouled and exasperated by the folly of Minna.

The deaths of Siegfried and Brunnhilda were political deaths. The end of Tristan and Isolde is significantly called a *Liebestod*. That Siegfried should have had to die was in the fitness of things: he had allowed his cause to be betrayed by his connections with Gunther and Gudrune, natural enemies of his cause. That Brunnhilda should have died at the moment of her triumph was no less in the fitness of things: such a woman could ask no better end. She was a rebellious

element in the *bourgeois* life into which she was born, and she died when her work was done.

But that Tristan and Isolde should have had to die was due to nothing but the ridiculous outlook of Wagner's own age, not yet emancipated from the sexual absurdities of Christian teaching, and the puling philosophy which lost to King Mark the one man who could have ennobled his petty kingdom.

Wagner's love-music for Kundry is a further expression of the reality of sex in the greater world—the sphere where it passes beyond the personal music of melodic song, and permeates the whole community. Kundry's music is not that of pure sensuality as was the music of Venus—and by pure I mean literally pure: the purity of a Magdalen who has not chanced to meet the man who can fulfil her life. Kundry's is the music of the careful, dangerous, mother-love which so often accompanies the love of a sensual woman, and may, if the male does not withstand it, keep him for ever in a virgin condition of pure foolishness.

Beethoven opened the flood-gates of sex into music, Wagner guided the powerful stream with increasingly conscious intention. But all composers since Beethoven's time have taken such advantage as they could of the powers he freed.

Schubert's music of petty *bourgeois* love is true as bird-song is true, but its narrow and sentimental range does not allow it to approach the deep passions of the greater men. Gretchen at her spinning-wheel is a real figure, nevertheless. And in the same category are certain little studies of Wolf—the sordid little servant-girl, Philina's dainty flouting of convention. But Schubert was too self-satisfied, and Wolf too content with peeping at things, to realize the full extent of the depths they approached.

Throughout Christian civilization the great power of

sex has only been thoroughly realized by those artists who have been in definite revolt. Lesser artists have skimmed its surface. Bad artists have slimed it with sentimentality, and even mocked it with religion. Saucy artists have laughed at it. It has been as if a great spring, dammed by religion at its source, had turned a whole land into a marsh. Will-o'-the-wisps have danced over it. Sour smells have risen from it. Falsehoods have been told of it. Only a few of the greatest have known how to drain the marsh, and provide themselves with the flowing force which carried them into new worlds of expression—worlds where personal aspects of sex have been linked up with the larger communal world, and the deepest mysteries of life.

So long as sex remains a mere personal expression, unrelated to that larger world, so long its only right treatment in music is that of the simple spring-song. So long as artists are concerned with sex as a pleasurable and passing physical experience, so long must it remain in the derisive atmosphere favoured by Molière, Mozart, and Shaw. But to stop short at that point is, as Beethoven and Wagner have shown, to refuse a great part of life itself; and that refusal has been steadily made in the post-Wagnerian period.

Sex is still the outstanding subject of music; and the result is generally fatuously weak or nastily inverted, like Prokoviev's 'Three Oranges,' Strauss's 'Salome,' and Respighi's 'Belfagor.' And here again, at the breakdown of civilization Stravinsky shows himself as the typically decadent composer. As he destroys music as an art, and restores the religious conceptions of the savage, he proclaims the sexual instinct, in *Petrouchka*, as the mere irritation of non-seminative puppets whose life-strings are pulled by a money-making showman.

MUSIC AND WAR

If musical expression offers any guide to human nature, there seems to be some psychological connection between war and religion.

Songs of religion and the war-path numerically headed our classification of American Indian songs. Religion and war both nearly disappeared in folk-music which expressed the post-tribal agricultural life. During the period of Christian civilization war and religion have had a new and increased importance as subjects for music.

With the Indians war was the inevitable and not ignoble condition of a people who depended for livelihood on a limited and uncertain area of hunting-ground. The moods of their fighting-songs were spirited and seldom blood-thirsty. With the development of agriculture war became a nuisance. The only songs the peasant had for it were songs of cursing, because of the loss of their crops and their sweethearts. Christian wars present a more complicated problem.

Local war was a concomitant of medieval civilization with its urban rivalries. Larger wars resulted from the division of Christendom into nationalities. World wars are resulting from the distractions of international finance.¹

Even the later wars have not been entirely bound up with ignoble feelings. The livelihood and integrity of whole peoples have sometimes been involved. But, on the other hand, some war-music made by Christian nations has had characteristics which are unquestionably shameful.

Indians, returning from a victory, sang of the cowards of their own tribe who had remained at home. They even sang a call to the wolves to come and devour the

¹ See *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Chapter VI.

dead. That song, if sanguinary, was sanitary also. It was left to a leading British composer to celebrate the defeat of his enemies (in 1900) by setting to music a poem of Henley which says:

Blow, you bugles of England, blow,
Though you break the hearts of her beaten foe.

General human intelligence has not yet reached the point which makes wars impossible; but the mere fact of the educational opportunities of civilization seems to offer less excuse for this reaction from peasant life to savagery. Wars of colonization may have been partly caused by the expansion of physically fertile races; but even that probably gives less excuse than is generally believed, for there are many recorded instances when prospecting invaders have been received in a friendly way by the aborigines.

Colonial wars have resulted, especially during recent years, less because of the expansion of races. Of that there is evidence enough in the seizure of Scottish crofters' lands for the sake of deer-stalking, and in the British failure to people Australia. As the Webbs have so clearly shown, later colonial wars, whether British, French, German, or American, have been due to the rapacity of financiers. They, with their almost mechanical organization, are practically without human feeling as they pursue their quest for more and more profits.

Financiers of themselves could wage no war. The necessary support is gained from the masses of the people (not always their own countrymen), by inflaming the public senses with the germ of imperialist idealism. If the poison is inoculated at a sufficiently early age, by means of Empire Day flag-wagging, cadet *esprit de corps*, and so on, an adult starveling population may later on be induced to develop the pot-bellied, pot-brained emotions which are miscalled patriotic. In wars stimulated by such ideals the

possibility of ignoble emotion can be gauged by the above quotation from Henley, which celebrated a war of which every British person is now ashamed, because its real causes have since been laid bare in the written lives of Rhodes, Jameson, Milner, and the rest.

Since then the leading nations of the world have faced each other with the knowledge that, the exploitable earth having been nearly all seized, the only way of continuing the piracy called capitalism is to grab what they can from each other. So we enter the period of world-wars.

Now let us look at the music which has resulted from this steady development in the art of mutual mass-murder.

During the earlier period of musical development in our civilization warlike emotions found singularly little expression in music. Songs like the Anglo-Scottish border ballads did not belong to civilization; they were bardic remains of a people not far advanced beyond the conditions and intelligence of the North American Indians. As those people turned to agriculture, and gradually settled down to a civilized life, they had less and less occasion for a music of unsettlement. War-songs of bygone ages became mere subjects for romantic amusement. So, as recently as the sixteenth century, in the making of nearly three hundred madrigals, we found that only one referred to war, though that was an age when, according to English histories, our people were filled with the most noble of defensive feeling.

Perhaps Elizabethan composers, concerned with more delicate and spiritual aspects of life, were out of touch with national feeling. Perhaps serious composers like Byrd and Dowland, especially in their secluded lives as servants of the Church, servants of county families or even of the court, may have been unable to respond to the passions of the greater world,

especially in a detail which may have been offensive to their refinement. Composers trained in the unreality of Christian doctrine and the fanciful loves of romantic shepherd-life, were naturally unable to find music for the coarse and warlike moods of the nation at large.

A similar and more significant musical inability has happened in later times. Beethoven could find good music in his Mass when he wanted to protest against the evil of war; but his Wellington Symphony shows that he could only find a worthless music for its triumphs. So also, in our own day, Elgar made good music for some of the sorrows of the Great War, for the woes of oppressed Belgians and Poles; but the real origin of his imperialistic music is declared in the very title he gave it—'Pomp and Circumstance'!

Composers of any worth are apparently unable to get into their stride under the stimulus of warlike feeling, unless they are also moved by the passion for freedom. Yet music has been regularly employed throughout Christian civilization for the rousing of war-fever, and for keeping that sickness at the necessary temperature. That music, so far as we have knowledge of it, has been inferior in musical quality. Its rhythmic values have chiefly been required; its developed values have mattered little. As we found in the music of savages, rhythm is the element which results in the most complete merging of the person in the community. A fine melody involves a keen sense of personality. A poor melody is an advantage when, as in army drill, the object is to obliterate that sense.

Songs like 'The Absent-minded Beggar' and 'It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary' are poor enough in phrase and harmonic combination, but they had the sort of lilt which enabled men, not only to march as one man, but to become hypnotically merged in spirit. Such songs are not songs of the people, but songs for the mob and for mobilisation.

Now it is not to be supposed that at the time of the Spanish Armada, while English composers occupied themselves with loony-love, the English people were without war-music. Most of it was probably so poor that it has not endured—was literally unendurable. From Chappell's 'Music in the Olden Time' we may be able to understand the sort of thing it was.

Containing a few real folk-songs, a few pleasant minor pieces by known composers, the Chappell collection includes a good deal of the kind of music which, in later times, has been heard in music-halls. A subject-analysis yields the following:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Elizabethan</i>	<i>Total period covered: 13th-18th centuries inclusive</i>
Religion . . .	1	9
Labour . . .	4	15
Sea-life . . .	1	9
Love . . .	36	135
Drink . . .	2	31
Poaching, etc.	1	3
Robin Hood . .	0	7
Fighting . . .	5	24
Money . . .	0	10 (<i>all of late period</i>)
Royalist . . .	3	18
Anti-royalist . .	0	2
Death . . .	8	16
Amusement . .	2	30
Miscellaneous .	5	39

The Elizabethan period occupies one-sixth of Chappell's pages from the time the actual examples of music are given. Judging by the number of royalist songs, the Queen had no greater and no less a place than her predecessors and successors in the minds of the singers. But although the most distinguished musicians of the time were disinclined for war-music, and the folk-singers would have none of it, the sort of ballad-singers who yielded Chappell's harvest was more than usually fond of fighting-songs, and amazingly concerned with death.

The five fighting-songs should tell us something of the mob-mentality of the time.

'Lord Willoughby' celebrates a 'famous and bloody battel' fought in Flanders against the Spaniards, who were beaten. As the fight took place oversea it was not a defensive struggle for either combatant. The result of that particular war was that 'the commercial supremacy of our own capital was first established.'¹ The atrocities of Alva provided Protestants with the requisite religious ideal.

The next song is 'Who List to Lead a Soldier's Life.' Unfortunately Chappell did not print the words. Perhaps its tendency may be guessed by the help of a subsequent parody, 'Who List to have a Lubberly Load.'

'The British Grenadiers' ushers in with song a new kind of fighting by means of massed bomb-slaughter. The music has a jaunty cock-sure rhythm. To understand what such a music implies, compare it with the famous 'Agincourt' song. The latter, it may safely be said, was never sung by any crowd of war-fevered people; it is too sober in the make of it; but at the time it was made it seemed to be a fitting song for the king of the English bowmen who had come victoriously through a dangerous situation. Such a victory is recorded without bombast in a solemn and strong tune. Massacre by bombing, it would appear from 'The British Grenadiers,' is a comparatively cushy job.

The fourth Chappell song is 'Chevy Chase.' The fifth concerns the Armada, and is a real example of killing the enemy with the mouth:

Then straight they fled by sea and land,
That one man killed a score-a;
And had they not all run away
In truth they had killed more-a.

Nothing of the storm which effected the greater discomfiture and destruction of the enemy ships. For

¹ Green, *History of the English People*, IV, p. 281.

that we must look to romantic, idealistic, religious poems like Schiller's and Macaulay's.

That then was the music of the Elizabethan English at war: a song of pride in a noble lord for his leadership in a fight oversea, to save poor little Flanders from the Spaniard, and incidentally take over from the Flemings the commercial supremacy of their chief city! A jaunty song for bomb-throwing! A cock-crowing when the brave work of a few English sailors was made completely effective in the accident of a storm at sea! A song in praise of feudal strife! And what appears to be a specimen of that cynicism which must definitely be placed to the honesty of real soldiers in all wars.

'Chevy Chase' excepted, the above-mentioned songs are fair examples of the music that is produced when the skill of the musician is placed at the service of civilized war. So the musician contributes to the efforts of those who, for their own idealistic or commercial ends, play upon the ignorance of simple people, producing mob-fear and mob-bravado where otherwise would be critical hesitation.

Such music has apparently been made increasingly throughout the decadent period of Christian civilization. The fact of its short and fevered life used to be sufficient evidence of its value. It has neither depth nor consistent appeal to what is fine and lasting in human nature. It is the more significant, therefore, that in these days commercial interests in music-making are able to revive the musical rubbish of the Great War. That is being done chiefly through the cinemas which have supplanted the music-halls in public favour, and through the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Now let us consider war-music of real æsthetic value.

Bach in some of his cantatas made splendid fighting-music for the spiritual battle against the legions of hell. So far as Christian civilization was concerned, those

hellish legions were the very forces which had caused the greater number of European wars.

As I have already shown in my study of Bach's life-work, the spiritual battle for which he made music symbolized the real political struggles which had been going on between the ruling-classes and the masses of Christendom ever since the failure of the popular cause in the Middle Ages.

From time to time those struggles had assumed the nature of a semi-class-conscious warfare; but that half-consciousness had been smothered by the efforts, eventually successful, of various local rulers to enforce national divisions on what at one time bade fair to be a communist civilization, with a gradual rationalization of superstition.

By the time Bach came to his work the people's cause had been definitely lost, though its principles were retained in the popular, as distinct from the orthodox, conceptions of theology. Resulting from that popular theology we have such cantatas as 'Ein feste Burg'; 'Erhalt' uns, Herr'; 'Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält'; and the cantatas for St Michael's Day. The realistic quality of their music is no mere expression of ghostly or psychological strife. It expresses physical warfare or nothing at all. Bach was no child to describe superstitious contention in phrases which clearly refer to strife in the field where real armies are opposed.

It had been one of the devices of the ruling-classes of Europe to keep their peoples in subjection by dividing them, not only geographically, but also by means of spiritual controversy. A study of the part played by the British Government in the superstitious contentions between Hindus and Moslems shows that such methods are still of some political value.

From the time when the treacherous papacy had been allied with the local rulers of Christendom in

crusades against the Moslems, down to the warfare of Bach's own day, the peoples of Europe were led to believe that they were engaged in struggles for 'Christ.' That pretence was continued even after the Catholic-Protestant cleavage. How hollow the pretence was history shows. The crusaders were a greater curse to the working people of Christian lands than they were to the Moslems. Bach's own king had become a Catholic that he might be able to sit on the throne of Poland, while retaining the kingdom of Protestant Saxony.

Bach's realistic musical phraseology related the clouded meaning of the theological strife to the clear significance of the political situation; just as Beethoven's trumpet-calls in his Mass were, later on, a reminder that the sacrificial plea for peace was sheer nonsense while sanctified warfare was raging. (The Holy Alliance!)

In the theological idiom which meant something real and vital to Bach his genius moved freely and significantly in regard to the great war for freedom. For actual warlike emotions he had no music. While the war-music of his sacred cantatas rings real, the references to fighting in his secular cantatas are joined to no significant music.

The Peasant Cantata contains a typical countryman's self-congratulation because his village has escaped the attentions of the recruiting sergeant. The cantatas in praise of royalties contain phrases complimenting them on their ability to 'protect' their subjects by force of arms. For such an obvious inversion of the truth Bach had only the thin musical background of recitative. His creative impulse concerned itself with other princely attributes—their fame and glory, their hunting prowess, even their courtliness. When his librettist involved him in a song for the Spirit of War in 'Tönet, Ihr Pauken,' Bach gave to the bloody-

mindful lady a merry song with accompaniment of flutes. Compare that with the virile fighting-music of 'Ein feste Burg,' and it is at once apparent that Bach would sing for the real cause of popular freedom, but for the political opposition of princes discovered only so much musical interest as enabled him to carry out a servant's task.

Handel's war-music reveals a similar difference of impulse. There is splendid fighting-music in 'Judas Maccabaeus,' but only middling music for the Te Deum and Anthem written to celebrate the British victory of Dettingen.

Newman Flower, in his *Life of Handel*, gave an amusing description of the part played by George II in that battle. The king, it appears, discovered in himself an unexpected courage; so Handel was required to make music for 'Le Guerrier malgré Lui.' What resulted was 'Le Musicien Vaincu.' But 'Judas Maccabaeus,' telling the story of an oppressed people fighting for freedom, is one of the master's best works, especially in the fighting parts.

However, there is an important and serious difference between the best war-music of Bach and the best war-music of Handel. Bach's music was concerned with a struggle that still went on even though in a merely theological form. Handel's music was for a struggle that belonged only to history. In 'Judas' Handel took a line afterwards followed by other composers, whereby war is presented as a romantic thing.

Even tyrants can find pleasure in expressions of struggles which do not personally concern them. During the most oppressive periods of imperialism the ruling-class of Europe has numbered among its pleasures performances of such works as 'Judas Maccabaeus,' 'The Song of Miriam,' 'Masaniello,' 'Rienzi,' and 'Shamus O'Brien.' Such works may arouse remote sympathies with the idea of freedom; but invoking

heroes of bygone revolts which have no connection with existing political conditions, they remain in the romantic sphere. In such works an oppressing class may even enjoy a magnanimous feeling of sympathy with the oppressed—providing the oppressed peoples are not the ones whom they themselves are engaged in oppressing.¹

From time to time during the nineteenth century a real war-music was made, generally on a small scale, and expressing the will to freedom of oppressed peoples. 'Poland's Dirge' by Chopin, and the 'Song of Tyrtæus' by Sibelius (banned by the Czarist government) are pieces of that kind. But for the most part the war-music of that period was romantic. Loewe wrote several songs of war, but the thing itself was so unreal to him that he did not mind what nation's emotions he concerned himself with. Though a German his Napoleonic songs are among his most interesting pieces. Schumann's and Wagner's settings of 'The Two Grenadiers' are examples of the same romantic indifference. In such pieces it is clear that war is no reality. Composers were merely using the echoes of emotions that they might add an item to the list of their compositions.

Elgar had been doing the same sort of thing during the earlier part of his career. Then real war came upon him. It will be instructive to compare his works for romantic war with his real war-music.

King Olaf is devoted to the advancement of Christianity in pagan Scandinavia. The war-chorus of 'Thor' is one of the finest pieces Elgar ever made. The Christianity of Olaf is expressed by a music with an element of suavity, by no means a better music. Elgar has not weighted the musical scales against the pagans.

¹ In 1916 I asked Sir Charles Stanford for permission to perform 'Shamus O'Brien' at Glastonbury. He said he would have been willing had it not been for the existing conditions in Ireland.

When we examine the Christianity of Olaf we find that he was chiefly moved by a will

To avenge his father slain,
And reconquer realm and reign.

When he got to Drontheim he offered the pagans a choice between immediate conversion to Christianity or the taste of his Christian battle-axe. He threatened, in the event of their contumacy, to sacrifice the pagan chief and his daughter as a kind of last offering to the old gods:

Nay, a sacrifice rich to their shrines I will yield,
My fairest in bower and best under shield;
My mightiest dies there, by sun and by moon,
Ironbeard, and my fairest, his daughter Gudrune.

Battle followed. Olaf won the fight with the Prince of Peace for his war-cry. The pagans were duly converted.

Olaf continued his career of Christian rapine, striking a woman on the cheek with his gauntlet, seeking places 'where the foemen thickest throng,' until finally, after his death, a less paradoxical Christian song is sung:

Stronger than steel
Is the sword of the spirit;
Swifter than arrows
The light of the truth is;
Greater than anger
Is love and subdueth.
Love is eternal!
God is still God, and
His faith shall not fail us.
Christ is eternal!

but there is no getting away from the fact that the music for the Christian idealism of the ending does not cut so deep as the romantic battle-music of the beginning.

Caractacus was a rather later work; but it is not so revealing, because the strife is between two non-

Christian peoples—Celtic pagans of Britain against the forces of civilized Rome. It was probably instinctive national feeling that caused Elgar to give to the civilized Romans a music which savours of barbarism, and to the British barbarians a deeper and more civil music; but whether for Roman or Briton his war-music is a true music, and evidently sprang from his heart.

Both *Olaf* and *Caractacus* are romantic works in the sense that the composer was concerned with historic or legendary, and not with real fighting. But they are real to this extent, that they express warlike feeling as an experience; and unlike nearly all other good war-music, they are *not* inspired with the spirit of freedom. *Olaf* is a bully who compels people to pretend Christianity. *Caractacus* accepts defeat in the least noble words for which Elgar ever found music:

Grace from the Roman! Peace and rest are ours;
Freedom is lost, but rest and peace remain;
Britain farewell! through all the lingering hours
Hope, memory, love, shall hide our golden chain.

But we shall not judge Elgar's music for war by those examples. They merely prove the emotional background provided by his subconsciousness. As Mr Stuart Fletcher has pointed out, 'It is the supreme paradox of Elgar the enigma, that in the music which is regarded as realistic—his laureate work—he has been most completely romantic, while in his romantic and mystical music he has unconsciously expressed most deeply the reality of life as it has impressed itself on his sensitive spirit.'¹

When Elgar was faced with real war he discovered an attitude very different to the idealization of militarism which had informed so much of his earlier work. His imperialist outlook simply fell away from him. The

¹ An article on 'Elgar, the Enigma' in *The Sackbut* for May 1933.

will to freedom which he had denied to Caractacus moved him to the music of real war.

Before the war he had even idealized British imperialism. During the war his chief utterances were on behalf of oppressed peoples, the Belgians and Poles. For the homeland itself his three choruses called 'The Spirit of England' tell all he allowed us to know of his feelings in association with words.

First a song expressing what so many of us believed, until the Treaty of Versailles, and our subsequent treatment of soldiers and their families, proved us to have been wrong, that England was still 'among the nations noblest chartered':

For us the glorious dead have striven;	[They have indeed, say the
They battled that we might be free.	[Are we?] [capitalists.]
We to their living cause are given;	[The dole!]
We arm for men that are to be.	[That they shall 'be' as short a time as future wars admit.]

The other two choruses—'To Women' and 'For the Fallen'—are less questionable; but it is clear from the quality of this music that the reality of war produced no such vital quickening of the master's maturity as the romance of war had produced from his earlier manhood. It was not by any of those war-pieces that Elgar's noblest genius was proved during the Great War, but by his chamber-music—the sort of music a man makes when he most completely retires from the world of action.

There are other modern works, directly or indirectly issuing from the Great War—works like Kodaly's indignant 'Psalmus Hungaricus,' Napier Miles's reflective 'Battle' song-cycles, Pizetti's 'Debora e Jaele,' Bliss's 'Morning Heroes'—but we have evidence enough already. The war-music of civilized man, like the war-music of savages, has a real source of inspiration when livelihood and national freedom are at stake.

The nature of the music under those circumstances has no blood-thirsty or vengeful character.

Romantic ideals of freedom, and even romantic ideals of militarism, may also move a composer to good music.

Aggressive war—and the only definition of aggressive war is war of invasion, whether for acquisition, or in nationalist opposition ¹—can only have a second-rate music—the sort of music that triumphed in the broken hearts of the Boers, that described how the Spaniards of the Armada were chased and killed on sea and land, and the tow-row-rubbish that shames the manhood of ‘The British Grenadiers.’

War drives musical inspiration away from real life. While Elizabethan mobs sang ‘how one man killed a score-a,’ Byrd and Dowland sang of unwarlike unrealities. While modern British mobs sang ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ (the soldiers themselves adding ‘I don’t think’) Elgar himself retired into chamber-music.

When human beings fall in love they temporarily merge their identity with that of another single person. Happy family life extends the area of merged experience. Patriotism, in so far as it is a noble emotion, seems to be a still further extension of that deep sense of identity, so that it includes all members of a race or nation. This is mingled to some extent with the enjoyment of locality which has its origin in habit; but that is not a chief part of patriotic feeling, for no man would stay in his country if he were absolutely alone in it.

National boundaries are generally arbitrary. England and Scotland intermingle in Northumbria as Germany and France in Alsace.

Racial boundaries are fluid. Though we found

¹ The war for republican freedom in Soviet Russia became an aggressive war during the time the Russians pressed on into Poland, thereby defeating their own object (the revolution of the Poles), and causing the national feeling of the Poles themselves to react from republicanism to tyranny.

British folk-music naturally dividing itself according to our racial divisions, in each separate division there was evidence of characteristics peculiar to the others.

If the emotion of patriotism is to be admitted—and no one who has experienced it will want to deny it, or the limited mental enlargement which is associated with it—then the still greater mental enlargement which causes a man to feel a certain identity with all men, even with his enemies, and with subhuman life, is clearly more important than patriotism even as patriotism is more important than a mere clan or family feeling.

We have seen how the apparently mystical nature of inspiration is produced by the subconscious working of the mind. Great art deriving from the conscious direction and control of the subconscious forces, necessarily results most fully when the very deepest springs of human nature are fathomed and free to bubble up. Personal love touching a small spring can result in a lovely tune. The deeper spring of patriotism can result in a deeper music, if the still deeper wells of human feeling are not violated. Thus patriotism will result in a true music when a people are fighting against oppression or invasion; but mental confusion results when the spring of patriotism is disturbed by mingling with the feelings which transcend national and racial integrity.

Though this may at first seem like mere mysticism, it is really common sense. But it is the apparently mystical nature of super-patriotic love that has made it possible for the priest to intervene and mystify an issue which only the arts can properly reveal and clarify. We have already seen how the ordinary intuitive feeling of savages and folk-singers corresponds in the matters of war and religion with the more conscious understanding of the greatest artists. But psychology is a science which is still in its infancy; and the priestly

mind has been quick to seize on the actual productions of the artists, and claim them for his own. The outstanding example of that in Christian civilization is, of course, the Bible itself, born of many poets and singers. Artists themselves are often puzzled by the nature of their own inspiration, and therefore have suffered themselves to be harnessed to the car of religion.

Once that had happened it was easy for the craft of the politician and financier to be associated with the craft of the priest, and for artists themselves to be diverted to some extent from their natural and instinctive tendencies. From that diversion only a second-rate art resulted. The fact that no great poem, painting, or music of war has been made unless it has been associated with the will to freedom is evidence enough that the subconscious part of the human mind has been a more reliable influence for man's weal than the conscious guidance of religion and morality.

The curious fact that religion and war rise and fall together in their quantitative musical expression seems to suggest that a kindred mentality moves in them both.

The Great War could only be waged by pretending to all the peoples concerned that their freedoms were at stake. So a moderate degree of musical inspiration was possible when the destructive mood of hate did not entirely dam the force of inspiration. But the comparatively poor musical result of the war in all countries is a sign that everywhere the spring of patriotism was turbid, because opposed to the deeper spring of common human nature.

To-day the financiers, politicians, and priests are at their old work. The inevitable opposition between a dying capitalist civilization and the incipient communism of Soviet Russia is being rendered to the public in false terms. Members of the capitalist class

whose lives are a continuous rebuke to Christianity work themselves up into fevers of mock-religious frenzy as they declaim against the natural will of the communists to keep their people free from superstition. Sooner or later war will result from the hatred fostered by these religious ones. Creative art and creative music will arise where the fight is of a defensive nature.

The following is the most popular of Soviet war-songs :

Red cavalry are we, of us brave tales are told ;
 Red cavalry are we who sing this chorus bold ;
 Red riders eager for the fight,
 Though wild the day, though dark the night—
 The thunder, the thunder of the charge.

Lead on, Budyonny, where the fight is fierce,
 Through shot and shell,
 A red path, comrades all !
 Now strike stout blows and win the workers' fight !
 Budyonny's men are dauntless of heart.

We fight for you who still must win your way
 Through storm and stress !
 A red path too is yours !
 But comrades all, you have a world to win,
 And what have you to lose but your chains ?

Budyonny is one of the chief officers of the Red Army. He was a leader in the war against the White armies which were supported with forces from Western Europe. The reader may be left to decide whether such a song is instigated by a passion for aggression or freedom.

MUSIC AND DEATH

For the Red Indians before the white invasion death was an inevitable incident of life itself. Life probably continued after death under conditions similar to those they already knew. Because of that the Indians met death with indifference, almost with contempt.

For the folk-singer death had a different aspect.

Except in those folk-songs which show an ecclesiastical influence, the death-songs of peasants express a feeling of definite finality. Death was a subject for tragedy or comedy. If they had liked a person they sang a tragic song of his death; if he had been disliked it was a matter for comedy.

The difference between the attitude of the savage and the peasant was perhaps connected with the increased feeling for personality which is expressed in folk-song. The prevailing communal feeling of the savage lost less by death than did the more dividual life of the peasant.

Post-Jesuite Christianity was charged full with apocalyptic morbidity, until the rise of a communal conception of civilized life diverted the current of feeling from morbid to material things. It has often been stated, and may be true, that most religions have had their origin in the fear of death; but it is clear that a good deal of early Christianity was imbued with the fearlessness of death; and certainly towards the end of the Dark Ages Christian life became concentrated on some of the healthier ideas of Jesus himself. The prayer that the Kingdom of God might come on earth became more real in the will of the Christians themselves to bring it about. When that intention was betrayed death once again became a matter of greater importance.

We have already noticed that the final defeat of the cause of communal civilization was expressed in music by a greater interest in the death of Jesus, so that the Magnificat gave way to the Stabat Mater as the chief expression of mother-love. Now we have to consider a similar music in relation to the more general idea of death.

The most significant settings of the Stabat Mater—significant in their progressive loss of fine feeling—were made from the time of Palestrina to the time of

Rossini. The finest examples of Passion music were made during the same period—from the time of Schütz to the time of Beethoven.

Later still it has not been the Passion, but the Requiem Mass which has most attracted composers who have had a will to make death-music. Finally, the Requiem has given way to more personal and imaginative conceptions.

Let us trace the tendencies of human feeling in regard to life's end as they have been expressed in the death-music of our civilization.

Byrd and Weelkes wrote elegies on the deaths of friends and patrons. Dowland's death-songs are more revealing, in that they actually express a personal longing for death. And recalling the unusual proportion of Elizabethan death-songs in the Chappell collection, it would appear that that so-called 'great' period of our history was in fact filled with despair.¹ The death desired by Dowland emphasized, not the hopes of heaven, but the disappointments of earth. Dowland would die, not because his work had been faithfully finished, but because it had been wasted. Moreover, for Dowland as for the folk-singer, death came as a full stop.

Admitting that to be a local, and perhaps an exceptional expression, as it was certainly personal and unChristian, let us pass on to works the typical nature of which cannot be gainsaid.

Bach's Passions are outstanding works of their kind. In them, as I have shown in the book already cited, the composer was not concerned to express a story of divine death, but the present and continued destruction of their god by living Christians—that god being no mystical Christ, but the ascensive life of the whole people.

¹ For a contemporary statement of the causes of that despair see William Harrison's *Chronologie*, written as a part of the *Holinshead Chronicles*.

Such symbolic significance is to be found in no subsequent Passion. Handel and Graun made pleasant music of diminishing value; and, judging by the nature of their music, with scant sympathy for the god whose tragedy they sang.

Haydn's 'Seven Words from the Cross' was intended as an instrumental commentary on the dying words of Christ. It was written for performance at Cadiz Cathedral. The bishop stated and interpreted one of the dying cries of Jesus; then one of Haydn's pieces followed by way of further illumination.

That idea, which apparently originated from the ecclesiastical authorities themselves, was significant. It indicated a feeling that music was capable of a kind of mystical revelation beyond the capacity of any other medium.

But it was not in the genius of Haydn to effect that revelation. His commentary was cheerful and child-like. The composer was avowedly concerned with the problem of writing seven consecutive adagios, without the relief of those merry movements in which his happy nature excelled. With what a satisfaction he must have reached his final earthquake, and roused his congregation with the sort of objective realism which came easy to him!

In its original instrumental form the 'Seven Words' is a tribute to the humility of Haydn, a naïve confession of his inability to say anything adequate to the situation. It was also a tribute to the humility of the Spanish priest who had so curious and true a sense of the ultimate value of music. That Haydn should subsequently have turned his adagios into choruses indicates his practical and non-morbid mind. They had to have labels if they were to be recognized as death-music.

Beethoven's 'Mount of Olives' concentrated on a part of the Passion story, and expressed the humanity

of the central figure. What Haydn could not have done in a hundred adagios Beethoven did in one. The orchestral introduction to 'The Mount of Olives' expresses the essence of the whole Passion. Beethoven stated the mortal manhood of Jesus in such deep and simple terms that no later composer has been able to make a Passion of any value.

Since that work composers have been faced with the dilemma of reaffirming the human mortality of Jesus, or reacting musically to such an unemotional degree that their reaction would be equivalent to the denial of their art.

Elgar was placed in that quandary in his 'Apostles' and 'The Kingdom.' As a faithful Catholic he took the reactionary course, and gave to Jesus a music of less significance than he had previously given to Gerontius.

Other post-Beethoven composers have expressed a sentimental, pathetic, ineffectual Jesus, or a pontifical prophet. The fact is that when Beethoven emphasized the humanity and mortality of that lovely, tragic figure, he said the last musical word. In making Jesus mortal in music, he caused him to die in music. Associated with such full expression Jesus became too human to linger on in musical art as a mere god.

Even Wagner, the one master who might have found a riper emotional expression for the subject, decided that it was impossible. But, as Brahms remarked, Wagner had 'one of the clearest heads that ever existed in this world.' Wagner knew that Christianity itself was dead. A composer could only write Christian music by abnegating his own right to decide about religious matters, or in sheer hypocrisy.

So Wagner wrote instead music for the death of a god, of all the gods, with heaven itself tumbling about the ears of those who still believed.

As long as the divine conception of Jesus endured,

and could be glorified by the most mystical of the arts, the crucified Christ was the crowning subject for Christian composers. When the natural development of music revealed its power to express the deepest springs of human feeling, its value as a handmaid of superstition was restricted.

From that time, instead of the death of Jesus, musical interest became centred on the death of mankind. Instead of singing of a divine death which was to result in a mystical life everlasting for those able to believe in it, there have been Requiems to declare that death is eternal rest, and to stimulate the waning faith of Christians with nightmares of doom.

In the *Dies Irae*, as in Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgement,' the gentle Jesus of the earlier tradition became the avenger of evil. So also had he once been represented by the judgement of the common people, who in the Middle Ages painted Doomsdays over their chancel-arches, and did not fail to include among the damned their tyrannous kings, treacherous bishops, as well as other typical sinners.

Mr Frank Kendon writes of those paintings in his book on *Mural Paintings in English Churches*: 'From the point of view of the ordinary sightseer of to-day these Dooms (I speak now of English paintings alone) are crude and provoking. The devils incite to laughter, and the mouth of hell, by its literalness, is a diverting simplicity. But we have lost our belief in devils and hell, we abhor anything too definite about our beliefs to-day, and can treat the Doom as a fantastic romance.'

Medieval artists themselves inclined to outgrow their dooms and devils. Professor Prior, in *Eight Chapters on English Medieval Art*, writes: 'The "lost" state was no doubt doctrinally as logical for sculpture as the happy state of the "blest."' But the English figures of Wells, Westminster, and Lincoln manifest the joys only. There is almost a merriment in this thirteenth-century delivery

of the sculptural mind: as it was in the fifteenth-century Renaissance of Italy.'

But in music, which is neither 'literal' nor 'definite' ¹ the presentation of ideas derived from the doomsday tradition could be tolerated and enjoyed at a much later date. The real heart of the Requiem Mass is not the surprising prayer for eternal rest, but the *Dies Irae*.

Had the communal development which informed the peak of Christian civilization, and the subsequent Protestant revolts, attained a fuller degree of material success, it is only fair to believe that the Day of Wrath would have given way before a rationalized conception of *Civitas Dei*. But the kingdom of God had failed to come on earth. The disappointed hopes of decent people became transferred to a future life. So, at the moment of death, which they hoped was the gate of a new life, the anger of thwarted mankind burst in a cry of vengeful doom.

Some feeling of that kind must have been in the gentle heart of Mozart, as he passed musical judgement on those who had played with his art and his life, and then cast him out to starvation. Resentment against the neglect of his work probably informed Berlioz's Requiem, which more nearly attained to inspiration than any other work of that grand *poseur*. Verdi's Requiem is but a grand opera with the chancel for stage.

No longer can Mozart's just judgement, much less Berlioz's strained anger or Verdi's avenger in grease-paint, make a musical doomsday credible. For the modern composer as for the later medieval artists in stone and pigment, the Day of Wrath is either a present fact or a fantastic romance. So, when a modern composer like Pizetti tries his hand at a Requiem, he proves himself a serious maker of music,

¹ That is to say not definite in factual representation; though most definite and exact of all the arts in essential expression.

but a very poor hater. Using a pseudo-medieval choral form, Pizetti's work has the effect of a neo-primitive picture. Having no intention of singing about the real day of wrath, which encompasses decadent civilization like a lowering storm, he dreams himself back in a simpler age; and he makes quite an effective romance as his basses and altos chant their threats and his sopranos and tenors cry 'Oh!' in assumed fear.

Protestantism, as a half-way house to rationalism, is at some advantage in its music for death. But it had first to discard its hell-fire. In two or three Bach arias there are suggestions of a doomsday as funny as any medieval painting. Spohr's 'Last Judgement' is a respectable romance without even stage thunder: the composer wouldn't have condemned a fly. In Bach's 'Trauer-Ode' and Brahms's 'German Requiem' the more sensational elements of doom have no place. Brahms certainly introduced the last trumpets, but they were only to wake everybody to eternal bliss; while the words which drew from him the finest music were 'All flesh is grass.' Bach's Ode passes from solemnity to ecstasy. Both masters are chiefly concerned with moods of peace and consolation, and make us feel that their works were intended for the comfort of the living rather than a revelation of the nature of death itself.

By the side of German Protestantism Anglicanism makes a poor show in the matter of death-music. Within the limits of its doctrine the English Church possesses a fine funeral service, expressing beautifully and triumphantly the idea that a more enjoyable life will ensue to 'good' people after death. Apparently the Anglicans don't believe it after all, for none of their musicians have made a living music for the service, or even a music giving expression to similar ideas. I am quite sure that the cleric who officiated at the

last religious funeral I attended did not believe it; for instead of allowing the triumphant note of the service to carry the mourners' minds away from the mere corpse below them, the poor parson performed his task in such a sympathetic and melancholy voice that the whole thing became a disgusting scene of morbid defeat.

Ruskin's gibe remains true: If a doctor expresses the likelihood of any Christian having to die, the response is not so happy as his religion would lead us to expect. Most of us will realize that Brahms's attitude in 'All flesh is grass' is a real rational advance on the average Protestant idea of death. Dying grass returns its virtue to its own roots, or gives increase of vitality to higher forms of life. What more can most of us desire for ourselves?

That need not prevent us from listening when artists say something regarding death which passes accepted knowledge.

So long as artists deal with death within the limits allowed by the dogmas of a perverted civilization, they follow where they should be leading. Only artists and scientists have any title to explore the matter. So for the final feeling of civilized man on this subject we must look to works which have not been made in the shadow of any Church.

Wagner was groping towards another idea of death, when, in *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, he caused sinful man to find a way to post-mortem bliss by means of woman's love. It was not until he wrote 'Tristan' that he came to grips with his idea—the idea that in death, as in love, human personality is absorbed in a deeper, but none the less real life—and when he followed up the idea in 'Tristan,' one sex was not saved by the other, but as a result of a reciprocal understanding.

A sense of the unimportance of death in comparison

with the fulfilment of love, and of the impossibility of death when attaining that particular climax of life, will be within the experience of most human beings. That such an experience merges us in a deep fountain of life in backward time seems certain enough. But whatever scientific and imaginative inferences may be derived from that experience, it is clear, that in cases like Tristan's and Isolde's, death was no truer solution of the love-problem than the salvation of sinners and roués, Vanderdeckens and Tannhäusers, by the sacrifice of 'pure maidens.'

If Wagner's earlier works take us back to the primitive idea of salvation by sacrifice, the solution of 'Tristan' is a denial of life itself.

'Tristan,' however, was not Wagner's last word. That is to be found at the end of 'Parsifal,' in the abdication of Amfortas who did *not* die. He, the typical priest, trustee of the mysteries, acknowledged that he was not the right man for the position. The imaginative world was not the right place for official pronouncements, much less the usual official inhibitions. Such a position belonged to Parsifal, the typical artist who, prone to mystical ideas because of the very nature of inspiration, revealed those ideas as suggestions and not as dogmas.

Berlioz and Spohr, retailing Catholic and Protestant dogmas regarding the Day of Judgement, were either funny or dull; but artists who are not bound to any dogma—religious, political, or scientific—have such right as their imaginations may suggest to them. Only let the Amfortas-salvationists and the Klingsor-negationists resign their unblessed tasks, and the way is clear for such a poet as Whitman, for example, to sing what he feels regarding death. If that song adds to the fulness and joy of this life it will have value, however opposed to traditional thought, however lacking in scientific support.

And it is indeed in Vaughan-Williams's setting of Whitman's 'Toward the Unknown Region' that we have one of the few modern musical expressions of death which is satisfactory to natural feeling, and not opposed to the intelligence of developed human beings.

Darest thou now, O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet,
Nor any path to follow?

Then we burst forth, we float,
In time and space, O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipt at last (O joy, O fruit of all!),
Them to fulfil, O soul.¹

The savage felt to death, as to all things, that it was a part of the scheme of *life*, of which he also was a part. That communal feeling seems to have lapsed during the development of the sense of personality, so the folk-singer looked at death as an evil for his friends and a just reward for his enemies.

So far we have found, in regard to almost every subject, that an effort has been made during the ascensive periods of civilization, to develop a new communal sense filled with the consciousness of personalities. But in regard to the idea of death that conscious communism has halted, though it has been recognized readily enough in action, when men have been found to die without demur for the sake of causes they have believed to be important for the common weal.

Christianity itself made loud professions of the nobility of Christ's sacrifice; though, being a God, he ought to have known he was safe to live for ever. In that case his sacrifice was sheer humbug. However, that has been merely the interpretation of his followers who

¹ Compare with that Keats's letter to his brother George on 'Soul-making.' For a scientific aspect of the same problem see Samuel Butler's *Evolution Old and New*.

had no intention of dying for any cause. So afraid of death were they that they came to believe that the sacrifice of their God was a sort of warranty for their own everlasting life! Fancy having to live for all eternity in the same heaven with St Paul, Alexander VI, Laud, and Rasputin, to say nothing of all the unwashed saints and pious ranters! But, as we have already seen, the Christian idea of death has been a mere theory. In fact Christians have concentrated chiefly on the ignobler side of the peasant's thought, and sent even their theoretical opponents to death with every intention of making an *end* of them.

The desire for immortality is a desire of youth, especially when fired by sexual passion. But as some men draw near to their lives' end, even confirmed materialists like Robert Blatchford and lifelong agnostics like Bernard Shaw attempt to strike fresh bargains with death, one by conversion to spiritualism, the other by propounding a theory that though everlasting personal life may be impossible, and even undesirable, man might still try for the comparative immortality of three hundred years. Did not a Russian die this very year (1933) at the age of 250? Is there not still living a Turk of 150 odd years?

It was a suggestion which Shaw as an artist had every right to make in the communal cause, even though he had previously assured us that every man over forty is a rogue. But the idea to be derived from natural human feeling seems less arrogant. As men draw near their end, if their lives have not been poisoned by religious fear and a sense of personal superiority, and their bodies have not been poisoned by physical drudgery, foul forms of labour, or an excess of idle pleasure, death seems to come as a gentle and not unwelcome relaxation of bodily fibre and mental egotism.

Beyond death, what matter? We have already

experienced death in great music. Every time we have heard a musical work of any deep significance we have died to the world.

Whitman's suggestions were good enough in their way; but reason rises even against poetry. Against music no reason can rise, for itself is the purest form of reason. Death is the dissolution of life as the end of a Bach fugue or a Beethoven symphony is the final dissolution of the problems the music has posited and solved during its course. The reality of the music lay, not in the last chord, but in the working-out of its problems.

Music over, a good listener is left with an afterglow of living silence.

PART IV

MUSIC = MATHEMATICS + MYSTERY

MUSIC as amusement is a contradiction in terms. Music, the essence of musing, results from an intense and co-ordinated activity of the human mind. It can no more be heard than it can be made without that co-ordination, though the actual art of listening involves a surrender, rather than an effort, of the conscious part of the mind.

A-musement, as Ruskin pointed out, is the avoidance of such a mental activity, and represents a definite mental degradation. It is a sign that the original music-maker has not properly used his faculties, especially his conscious faculties. (Perhaps he had only poor faculties to use.) Therefore he awakens in the listener no deep response. His art passes as a tickling breath over the surface of the listener's subconsciousness.

The quantity of a-musing music has increased with the progressive degradation of civilization.

In the music of the North American Indians there was none of it: the songs which had no practical and immediate relation to their lives were made (as some beautiful music has been made in civilization) to fill their leisure—to occupy and develop their minds during long winter evenings when no work could be done.

Among agricultural people little music is made for mere amusement. Such examples as we meet with seem to have resulted from the invasive influence of capitalist civilization. Peasants had to work for masters, and were allowed occasional jollifications to keep them in

a good humour. From those jollifications resulted certain folkish songs of second-rate value.

During the development of civilization there has been produced a class, which, living on the labour of others, has had so much leisure, that life has become a boredom. So the bored creatures have tried to alleviate their lot by means of (among other things) forced forms of art from hirelings.

Such forms of art show only a low degree of mental effort. They have necessarily been provided either by artists who were down and out and prepared to make pot-boilers, or by dullards in the pay of clever business men who have studied the fancies of the over-leisured folk, and supplied the market with such wares as they thought would go down. To encourage the consumption of their shoddy stuff they have developed a temporary market by means of lying advertisements, the most effective form being paragraphs sent out by their publicity departments, and inserted in the press by incompetent or venal journalists.

That way, of course, lies perdition, not only for real art, but also gradually for the hackmen, and finally for most of the impresarios as well; though, by getting quick returns on rubbish and selling out before the slump a number of musical commercials probably achieved all they had intended.

We have that final result to-day. Even the impresarios are failing. Wage-earning art-workers are increasingly unemployed. While in the high-brow department a considerable degree of technical skill is associated with the debasement of the finer forms of the arts.

Artists have worked under difficulties during the whole period of Christian civilization; but not until now have they been so cut off from the sources of inspiration that they have nothing to express. This is especially true of the youngest. It is not their fault.

Many of them have been well trained, and have obvious capacity.

We will ignore the tripe of the drawing-rooms, ball-rooms, and cinemas, and take as an example a work which has been hailed as (and under more favourable conditions might have been) a work of immediate and lasting importance—‘Belshazzar’s Feast,’ by William Walton.

The technical skill shown in that work is the result of a naturally industrious mind. A few passages in it show that the composer’s subconsciousness was stirred to passing moments of real activity. That he should have desired to make music for such a subject suggests a will to express a major problem of his time; and that sort of will has been evident in the work of the greatest artists. But when he came to its actual expression, Walton made a music which proves that between him and the subconsciousness of the majority of human beings there is no connection. To get over the division which separates himself from his fellows he shouts and screams and writhes, only to leave us unstirred. We hear his noise, not as in a vision but as a thing which prevents vision. His is the sort of divisionary music which leaves the conviction that, after all, he has nothing to say that is relevant to the subject. The new hotels in Park Lane, with all that they signify, might never have been built. Walton has neither dreamed ‘Belshazzar’s Dream,’ nor understood how to reach the dream-faculties of his fellow-beings.

I have chosen that work for an example, not merely because of Walton’s own genius, but because it might so easily have been a living musical example of the Doomsday which is so real—the Doomsday which is threatening us now, sending our statesmen scuttling about like ants in a disturbed ant-hill, just as they did in the days immediately before the Great War.

Is there no means of effecting union between such

men as Walton and the musical need of our time? It can only be done by the abandonment of the idea that genius is a personal thing, and can be used to personal ends; that noble musical inspiration can happen unless it arises in the welfare of human life as a whole.

Music expresses the reality of its time in two ways: by means of its own formative nature, and by means of its emotional associations. The formative nature of music is mathematical.

References have already been made once or twice in the course of this book to the mathematical basis of music; also to what is apparently the physico-mathematical basis of the sense of hearing.¹ There is also the further development of a mathematical principle in the logic which we feel a composer has used when emotion and structure seem to be fused in a fine piece of music. That logic, that fusion, is felt by all persons capable of enjoying a Bach fugue, a Beethoven sonata-movement, in the Second Act of 'Tristan and Isolde,' and throughout 'The Mastersingers' and 'Parsifal.'

'In the most beautiful work, a chain of argument is presented in which every link is important on its own account, in which there is an air of ease and lucidity throughout, and the premises achieve more than would have been thought possible, by means which appear natural and inevitable.' That is not a description of a Bach fugue or a Beethoven symphony, but a passage from Bertrand Russell's *The Study of Mathematics*. Every word of it, and a good deal more from the same essay might be applied to music.

¹ The published reports of Einstein's lecture at Oxford on June 12, 1933, seem to support such an idea. 'Our experience justified us in thinking that in Nature could be seen the ideal of a mathematical simplicity' (*Morning Post*); and 'It is my conviction that pure mathematical construction enables us to discover the concepts and the laws connecting them which give us the key to the understanding of the phenomena of Nature' (*Daily Telegraph*).

This is not a matter I am competent to follow up; but it seems of some significance that while there exists an undoubtedly mathematical basis for music, another mathematician explains music in terms of mysticism.

Mr J. M. W. Sullivan towards the end of his fine study of Beethoven says 'Beethoven's late music communicates experiences that very few people can normally possess. But we value these experiences because we feel that they are not freakish. They correspond to a spiritual synthesis which the race has not yet achieved, but which, we may suppose, it is on the way to achieving.'

Indeed, the same mathematician is so intent on emphasizing the mystical aspect of music that he seems unwilling to allow its activity as an expression of the real world. In his essay on *Mathematics and Music* he says 'Even the most remote mathematical theorems are certainly not immune from practical application. But no such claim can be made for music.' And there, I think, musicians must oppose the mysticism of a scientist; for the greatest composers proved their greatness, not only in the logical structure of their art, but in that very practical application of music the possibility of which Mr Sullivan denies.

Music in fact consists of its own peculiar mathematical formulæ which are analysable, plus a revelation of subconscious emotion which, when analysed in its turn, is found to consist partly of superegoistic experience and desire in relation to the real world. But what appears mystical in its expression is, I suggest, the working of the mathematical element itself—the perfect accord which makes an effect of mysticism, but is in fact due to the effect of the mathematical details of music yielding a perfect satisfaction to the human mind. If Einstein was correctly reported, mathematics offers 'the key to the understanding of the phenomena of Nature.' In Nature itself can be seen 'the ideal of a

mathematical simplicity.' The human mind, the peak of the spiral of natural evolution, finds in music a perfect sound-language; and the syntheses effected by the great masters of music result in effects so marvellous that they seem mysterious. But we have been able to trace the development of music in association with the realities of material life, not only in its generalized emotional appeal, but in the various stages of its growth from a merely rhythmic art to its fullest orchestral and dramatic forms.

Rhythm, melody, polyphony, and harmony are not arbitrary details which can be used effectively without regard to the human desires and needs which brought them forth. They represent stages in the growth of the development of human life; and can only be made effective by an intuitive use which results from the relationship in which the user, the composer, is placed to other human beings.

Rhythm arose in the need of primitive man for a statement of his communal relationship with his fellows, with the spirits of the dead, with the animal world, and in fact with the whole conceivable universe. It retains that communal virtue, and can only be made effective in a communal conviction.

Melody arose in the growing awareness of human personality—in the sense of a separate self with its special weakness, but also with its increased consciousness, and therefore its increased capacity for experience, and, on the whole, its increased joy in real life as distinct from the spiritual life, which in the savage mind bred doubt and fear, as well as desire and hope.

Polyphony arose in the will to maintain the sense of personality which had become too precious ever to be willingly lost; and, at the same time, so to order musical expression that the isolation and weakness of personality should be avoided. The effort to combine the two elements involved the inevitable clashes musically felt

as dissonance, interesting in themselves if a means could be found of accommodating the clashing parts. Did no clashes occur, it would signify a condition of such tameness, such personal nonentity, that the separate parts would at once be recognized as worthless and inexpressive. But the clashes unresolved would have signified the stultification of polyphony, the inability to co-ordinate this finer and more varied musical life, and finally the inability to preserve any fine single part. (We had only to examine the single parts of Stravinsky's 'Sacré du Printemps' to discover that they were not worth combining.)

Unresolved dissonances would have left polyphony in such a state of disorder that no further musical growth could have resulted. But men *felt* the mathematical beauty of the concord; and in a balanced relationship between concord and discord the finest music of Christian civilization was developed. Lesser artists were content with a minimum of dissonance. Greater artists—men in whom the shaping will was more developed—accepted the clashes to a greater and greater extent, according to their ability to fashion ultimate order from increasing complexity.

Dissonance was an accident of polyphony. Consonance was in the nature of music itself—music, and the correlative growth of the human ear, the human mind.

Science has instructed us regarding the acoustical basis of harmony, and explained how differences of musical timbre are a part of the same mental development, so that vocal and instrumental colour are recognized as extensions of the harmonic principle. The actual development of the harmonic sense, however, was not due to science, but to the intuitive feeling of creative artists. Occasionally the artists have even had to put the scientists in their place, as when they preferred thirds and sixths to the more 'perfect'

consonances. But from the beginning of the development of music as an art one of the laws of fine music has been that its elements must be intuitively used according to their natural values. The savage danced what were to him life's darkest mysteries, and he intuitively used that element of rhythm which merged his person with the very source of life itself. Wagner was consciously aware of many important problems of his time; but when he incorporated them in his creative work he fashioned a music in which all its elements intuitively functioned according to the changing need of the expression.

But music is proved not only by a true intuitive use of its mathematical elements. What is also necessary is that it shall convey an emotional message of an extra-musical significance. It was not enough for the savage to dance a rhythm; that dance was derived from extra-musical ideas which to the savage were more important than the dance itself. It was not enough for Wagner to use the *cor-anglais* for a perfect solo of solitude; that solo was derived from the extra-musical idea of Love in relation to Death, which for Wagner was more important than a well-made piece of music. As we have seen in the evidence assembled in this book, real music can only result from something real in human life. Whenever an attempt has been made to make music without reference to real life only a-music has resulted. A mean reality has produced a mean music. A pretended reality has been exposed by the music with which it has been associated.

The folk-singer, oppressed more and more by the advance of a bad civilization, produced mean songs in praise of kind masters; but he also produced spirited songs of revolt. That for him was the closer reality. When his masters tried to dope him with theological poison, he responded by turning religious phrases into gibberish.

The dead hand of religion tried, and is still trying, to shackle the human mind with a primitive music which is fit for its own petrified dogmas, but expresses nothing of reality to the human mind. The pretence of religion is exposed in the non-musical nature of Plain-song.

Papal Gregorian was countered with the living polyphony of the people, and it was the dead thing which had to give way. The dead thing can only be reimposed if and where the communal will has been broken.

Religion tried to use popular polyphony for its own ends, on terms of its own dictation; but Palestrina was too good a musician to think that on such terms any music could be made; so, by means of the sort of trickery he had learned from his Jesuit masters, he held on to the rhythmic basis he had been required to abjure.

The great Elizabethan period of English history was one of much suffering for the masses of the people. In their lives was no room for the developed art of music which had been enjoyed by their forefathers. Music accordingly suffered a serious decline. Its technical development could only be carried on in cloister or country-house. Music lost touch with the real life in which only it can find full expression. There resulted an art of amazing skill and intolerable monotony. There is more skill in Byrd's music for false shepherd life, but there is more music in 'Sumer is icumen in,' made to celebrate a real country life three hundred years earlier.

Bach and Beethoven made music for the Catholic Mass; but the musical nature of neither master allowed him to serve that savage and sacrificial ceremony. Bach had to concentrate on the formative principles of music itself. Beethoven concentrated on his architectonic skill, and incidentally drew attention to the falsity of a Church which cried peace and caused war.

The composers between Bach and Beethoven were

lesser masters, not because their technical skill was less, but because the servile positions into which they had been born prevented their music from being fertilized by the creative spirit of the greater world.

The composers between Beethoven and Wagner were lesser masters, not always because their technical skill was less, but because they generally and deliberately chose romance instead of life for their subject-matter.

Music since Wagner has been atavized to the Voodoo-noodleism of Stravinsky not only because composers have failed to look to real life for their ideas, but also because they have failed to work according to the nature of the material they have pretended to employ. They have not only refused the greater reality of life itself, they have also refused the reality of music which had previously been accepted in some degree by all musicians, great and small, realist and romantic, servile or rebellious, academic or experimental.

To refuse the greater reality which gave greater inspiration to Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner, and to refuse the lesser reality which results from the acceptance of the nature of music itself is the game of a blithering idiot; but it is a game that has been increasingly played of recent years. Why?

Can we perhaps try to understand something of the effect made by music upon the human mind.

Folk-singers and players could not remember any tunes of which they had forgotten the words and dance-figures. The words and dance-figures of their pieces were the conscious parts of their art; music was a subconscious background which they had not tried to explore.

What Cecil Sharp recorded of the physical attitude of folk-singers ¹ corresponds with D. H. Lawrence's description of Indian singing, and the statements of

¹ *English Folk Song*, p. 106.

Naumann, the German musical historian, regarding the singing of the Chinese. In each case the condition described was one of partial hypnosis. The lower brain-centres had assumed a larger measure of activity than ordinarily. Whether such temporary abrogation of control by the higher brain-centres is a good or bad thing must be decided by those higher centres themselves.

A new-born baby, using only the lower brain-centres, is prepared to suck at odd times. The higher brain-centres of the mother enable her so to order her life that the activity of her breasts becomes a regular timed process. That is to the advantage of the baby's stomach as well as the mother's peace. But the baby still uses its lower brain-centres in the act of sucking. The greater importance of the lower brain-centres during those moments remains.

In a musical activity the value of the power possessed by the lower centres must be decided by the higher centres during their periods of control. The choice is between the acknowledgement, encouragement, and a limited guidance of those lower centres, and a merely intellectual, cold, and scientific music. What really decides the musician in favour of the temporary and partial abdication of his higher centres is the fact that the music resulting has, for some reason or other, generally been of a moving quality such as cannot otherwise be obtained. Moreover, on the whole, the music which issues from that condition has favoured tendencies of human sympathy and development which have been approved by the higher centres.

Perhaps a personal statement may be allowable in a relevant but non-musical experience. I have learned, when confronted with problems which have seemed difficult of solution, that if an immediate decision is not forced, a single night's sleep (at the most, two nights') would find me, immediately on waking, with a clear

resolution of the problem. That apparently is a common experience, which has resulted in the well-known saying, 'I will sleep on it.' My higher brain-centres have learned to trust my lower brain-centres in that regard. They have found from experience that there is a kind of 'lowness' which is associated with a greater trustworthiness.

It seems to me that a similar experience caused the Indians to differentiate between those songs which, they said, came to them in visions, and those which were merely 'made by man.'

Apparently it is also possible for the lower centres to assume control of one activity even while the higher centres are engaged with another. It is possible for executant musicians to perform intricate music while their conscious minds are engaged with involved games of chess. Sir Walter Parratt could do that sort of thing. It is not suggested that the result is necessarily of any value in either direction. That must be decided by the quality of the result. No one ever accused Parratt of being a musician with striking interpretative power. But if the conscious intellect approves a series of results which have ensued as a consequence of the freedom allowed to the subconscious mind, we shall certainly learn to trust the lower centres to that extent, ignoring the kind of criticism which calls out against our 'mysticism,' and looking to science to explain the matter if it is of sufficient importance.

Anyone who has had experiences of that kind is inclined to be jealous of criticism in regard to them. The almost inevitable derision of people who are never conscious of their subconsciousness makes men shy of declaring such experiences. Perhaps that is why folk-singers are not easily persuaded to sing their songs.

Cecil Sharp and others have attributed that shyness to a fear lest the songs should not be judged sufficiently good by a stranger audience. Ducoudray in the

introduction to his 'Melodies Populaires de Basses-Bretagne,' ascribes it to a deeper feeling—"un sentiment de retenue qu'on pourrait appeler "la pudeur du chant.""¹

A peasant, possessing an art which must be something of a mystery to himself, is probably jealous of his dæmon—jealous of a faculty which, however explainable by science, is associated in his mind with a mental state removed from that of his normal life.

I suppose it will be generally admitted that our lower brain-centres bring us more closely into relationship with our fellows. The dividualized flower at the tip of its stem stands aloof from its fellows; but if it can feel down far enough into the plant it reaches a point where its dividuality becomes mingled with the dividualities of other flowers deriving from the same root.

So we, sinking back upon our subconscious mentality, become more intimately related to other human beings. If from that point of more intimate relationship it is possible to concentrate the feelings which we share in common, and bring them to expression by means of art, and especially by means of an art which depends on the subconsciousness to such an extent that savages and peasants are scarcely aware of it although they are fully aware of the verses which come with it—then the nature of musical inspiration is more understandable.

We have already quoted a definition of inspiration which tallies with that suggestion—that it is the subconscious becoming conscious. It is an awareness by the separate flower of its greater life in the plant which it most beautifully represents, and to which, in the production of seed, it has a special responsibility. In

¹ Pudeur=honte honnête; chasteté; modestie (Lavresse). For another sidelight on the nature of the emotion, see the quotation from *Fox Strangeways* on p. 10.

humankind it is the awareness by the individual of his increased powers in certain directions when he allows himself to be swayed by those forces which he shares in common with his fellows. And it reaches genius in those artists whose subconscious connection with their fellows is accompanied by a conscious control of their medium—music, painting, verse, whatever it may be.

During the course of musical development in the last few centuries down to the time of Wagner composers became more and more conscious of the nature of their work, and of the responsibility it entailed. Bach was completely conscious of his technical skill, and partially conscious of the element of revolt in the cause he served. Beethoven was completely conscious of his technical skill, and of his own particular revolt against tyranny and formalism; but he also had glimmerings of insight into the nature of music itself. That may have been the cause of the extra trouble he had in forging the one inevitable phrase for the revelation of his conceptions. Such labours as his sketch-books prove may have resulted from the mental conflict which arises when a too conscious mentality is deliberately seeking for subconscious strength—the same sort of difficulty that we experience when we consciously try to swallow. Wagner was the most completely conscious of all great composers. He was so conscious of the nature and responsibility of his work that he was able to devote his mind to the most important communal developments of his time, and yet to be able to relinquish conscious creative effort in the act of music-making.

Of course this double mental capacity is not common, or all artists would be first-rate geniuses. Even where it exists it is probably not at the beck and call of the will, though practice may bring frequency. Even the greatest composers made some music which had no

deep subconscious impulse. But when we recall how those three greatest masters were the very three who gave nearest expression to the needs and unformulated desires of their times, it does seem as if their inspiration must have been derived from that deep source where they could be joined with the divided wills of their fellow-men and women, and cause those wills to flower in works of beauty—those works bearing the seed which has been scattered, germinated, and in spite of all opposition, been of immense influence in the minds of all who live for more than themselves.

The subconscious reversion to a mental condition which places an artist in a closer and more sympathetic relation with his fellows must be distinguished from the conscious reversion to savagery which characterizes a great part of modern music.

Bach and Beethoven drew back into a sphere where their personal powers were reinforced by a power which in non-musical activities they did not possess. Having made that withdrawal they returned, bringing with them something worth having which had previously been unimaginable.

The conscious reversion of modern music-makers to primitivism is an altogether different thing. They offer us only the superstition, the cacaphony, the confusion, and the dirt—the things which we are consciously aware of in primitive life. They make no deep withdrawal from consciousness. Their primitivism is the natural result of a merely personal effort.

Nothing is more significant of the base nature of modernist art than its reversion to forms of primitivism, and its ignorance of the ascensive emotional and intellectual forces which caused real primitive art gradually to develop in finer and more beautiful conceptions.

However, we must not confuse that kind of reversion with the modified reactions by means of which artists

have from time to time recorded their protests against the evils of civilization. The paintings of the pre-Raphaelites and some of the post-impressionists offered examples of that kind of reaction. Musical reactions of a like kind may be found in the folkish works of George Butterworth, and the medievalism of Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw.

The intention of such reactions has probably been to pick up the right path at that point of convergence where the arts seem to have gone wrong. Such efforts have been noble, but futile. The arts went wrong because life itself had gone wrong. No mere æsthetic reaction can produce a living art unless life itself is created afresh. Such reactionaries probably have a desire for better conditions of life as well as of art; but their reformist methods occurred too late in the decay of civilization. The arts cannot be reformed unless life itself is reformed; and we cannot reform a rotting body.

Because of that fact, the noises of modernist musicians are really truer to the expression of a rotten life than the music of the nobler reactionaries; and we are actually experiencing to-day a musical decay which, in many aspects, reproduces even the ineptitudes of early music, the blundering efforts made by primitive musicians to divest their art of its unmusical details. We have noticed many such details in the previous pages. Thus—

1. Modernist rhythms are savagely monotonous or vague.
2. Percussion, the mainstay of savage music, becomes increasingly the chief resource of modernist orchestral composers, and invades even chamber-music.
3. The meaningless scribble of children is reproduced in modern musical phraseology.
4. Unmanaged dissonance was a characteristic of

primitive heterophony; unmanageable dissonance, of modern heterophony.

5. The academic music of medieval ecclesiasticism refused the popular concords, and preferred fourths and open fifths. That same characteristic appears in much modernist music.

Modal music and the revival of the ballet might also be taken as examples of a reversion to savagery; but in these cases the reaction has had beautiful results. It has proved itself, not as atavism, but as the picking up of dropped threads. Modal music may seem a reaction from music based on major and chromatic scales, but it is no real reaction unless an attempt is made to crowd out the more defined and flexible scale-forms. Similarly the reaction from music-drama to mime may seem a reaction inasmuch as, leaving out the voice, the ballet leaves out the instrument most fit to express the intellectual faculty; but if a living and lovely thing results, and no attempt is made to profess a higher form in what is obviously a lower, there is no harm done.

The real modernist music-dealer is unable to relate dropped threads to the fuller developments of music. Those fuller developments are far beyond his strength. In this matter they are on a level with the Romanist reversion to Plain-song. The full developments of music have made of the art such a human thing that the only chance for the music of superstition is to revert to forms it had when superstition was most rampant. The ecclesiastical reversion to a primitive authoritarian music is just a part of the general modernist reversion to conditions of musical savagery. Superstition and Terrorism are the left and right hands of the same kind of will, and their natural music is one of dull authority or frantic fear.

On the æsthetic plane both are academic activities,

having no cause in the instinctive human love for music. The powerful effect of *Tristan* on the average cultured human being leaves no room for the carefully planned hysterical orgies of Stravinsky's adolescents. The powerful effect of *Parsifal* on the same sort of person leaves no room for the dull mysteries of a Gregorian sacrifice.

The humbug of musical modernism, sometimes called futurism, is exposed without much difficulty. The humbug of modern religion, though just as reactionary, is not so easily disposed of, because of its time-long association with all subconscious influences. Many things stir down there in the dark: not only music and the sense of beauty, but love and hate, fear and hope, all the outgrown desires of the human past, all the unformulated aspirations of the future. Science throws light into that darkness. The arts bring the dark things into the light. Religion is the dark expression of the darkness itself. If those forces are not kept in the dark there will be no religion.

Buckle said, 'If a people were left entirely to themselves, their religion, their literature, and their government would be, not the causes of their civilization, but the results of it.' But such evidence as we have makes us suspect that 'if a people were left entirely to themselves' they would realize that religion was a legacy from their early and ignorant years, and gradually set it aside.

Despite the outcry against 'militant atheism in Russia', it is quite clear that the ruling-classes in England, throughout Christendom, within and without the churches, believe as little in the superstitions they profess as Buckle did. They do not even believe in the reasonable ethics of their God, as their actions show.

Lucretius recorded the evil nature of religion in a pre-Christian civilization.

'When human life to view lay foully prostrate upon earth,
crushed down under the weight of religion, who showed her

head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face and first to withstand her. . . . If men saw that there was a fixed limit to their woes, they would be able in some way to withstand the religious scruples and threatenings of the seers. As it is, there is no way, no means of resisting, since they must fear after death everlasting pains.' (From *De Rerum Natura*, trans. by H. A. J. Munro.)

As with the cultured of Imperial Rome, so with us to-day. Religion has been exposed and outgrown; it continues only as a means of class suppression. Whatever was once valid in religion has been taken over and rendered more valid by science and law, leaving only those mystico-mathematical workings of the subconscious mind which come to consciousness in forms of beauty.

Beauty in architecture, painting, sculpture, and literature is vindicated by an obvious relation to the real things of life. Only music remains mysteriously detached.

Darwin wrote in his *Autobiography*: 'The state of mind which grand scenes formerly excited in me, and which was intimately connected with a belief in God, did not essentially differ from that which is often called the sense of sublimity; and however difficult it may be to explain the genesis of this sense, it can hardly be advanced as an argument for the existence of God, any more than the powerful though vague and similar feelings excited by music.'

When, nearer to the beginning of things, religionists indicated music as the most effective spirit in their distillery of magic, they indicated the mental activity which should naturally supersede their own. The emotional and subconscious forces which originally evoked the religious spirit will remain with us, however clearly science may explain, or fail to explain them. As in their crassest form they found imaginative

expression in music, so music is still their natural and most desirable discharge.

That has been felt instinctively as well as consciously recognized by people of very different trends of thought.

The Spanish priest who incited Haydn to make a purely orchestral commentary on Christ's last words had an inkling of it.

A rationalist like Zangwill referred to the subject in his *Italian Fantasies*. 'Let the religion of the future be writ only in music—Palestrina's or Allegri's, Bach's or Wagner's, as you will—so that no heresies can spring from verbal juggles, distorted texts, or legal quibbles.'

Ricciotto Canudo, in his fine essay on *Music as a Religion of the Future*, brings us to the natural end of the subject, and explains why, at the moment when the absurdity of religion is perceived by masses of the people, the traditions of the art of music have been attacked. He comes to the conclusion that 'The increasing mystic restlessness, so characteristic of the present generation, has to be concentrated then in the evocation of our men of genius, in the exaltation of our heroes, and the creation of our new gods. . . . With the individual dispersion of our modern life, with the domination of our critical spirit and our reasoning out of reason itself, one power alone can bring about the inner union of the multitude, that of Music.'

The evil referred to by Canudo was the evil that pressed on D. H. Lawrence throughout his career. It was finally expressed by him in his posthumous *Apocalypse*. In that work, he, who had so often shrunk from others, even in a degree of hate, decided that the only hope for man was in a 'living wholeness,' a 'living unison' with his fellows. He realized at last that the intellectual life was but 'the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters'; that men have need for a consummation of life which shall be something

broader and deeper than the 'isolate salvation' of a soul—a consummation, moreover, which can be achieved here and now, in the only life of which we know, in which we have an influence.¹

Lawrence exactly expressed the evil which has resulted from the suppression of the communal principles of Christianity, and the lack of any means of 'wholeness' in a physical world which isolates us from each other. Using such a term as 'living unison,' he instinctively moved towards that art wherein the 'glitter' of the separate mind strikes down to the depths where he could have found communal salvation instead of 'isolate salvation.'

That 'individual dispersion of the modern life,' that 'isolate salvation,' has tried to find its own peculiar expression in music; but, as we have seen, it could only do so by making a kind of a-music which denied all the principles of the art as they have been discovered and proved from the earliest, simplest use of rhythm by savages to the most complex music of Bach and Wagner.

The refusal to accept the innate orderliness of music and the will to force a composer's personality upon his art, are also signs of the 'mystical restlessness' which, finding no truth in religion, no peace in art, resorts to such idiocies as the 'Black Mass' and 'Le Sacré du Printemps.'

Neither life nor music can be fine without the acceptance of the communal principle. Great masters have known that instinctively, as we have seen especially in the cases of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner. So, also, no fresh and adequate expression of music can be made until musicians generally realize that their art depends on real life for its inspiration, and turn to the communal principle to relieve them from the meagre life of dividuality.

¹ *Apocalypse*, by D. H. Lawrence, pp. 222-3.

INDEX

- Angelico, Fra, 109, 117, 122
 Arkwright's spinning-jenny, 79
 Arnold of Brescia, 90
 Astorga's *Stabat Mater*, 141
- Bach J. S., x, 3, 98, 100, 104, 112, 113, 114 *et seq.*, 121-2, 128, 131, 140-2, 149, 169, 175, 176-7, 183-5, 199-202, 212, 217, 222, 226, 231-2, 236-7, 243
 Bacon, Roger, 80, 91
 Beethoven, x, 100, 105, 113, 120 *et seq.*, 131, 143, 149-50, 169, 171, 175, 186-9, 191, 192, 196, 213-14, 222, 226, 227, 231-2, 236-7, 243
 Bennett, Leigh, on the Eucharist, 102
 Berlioz, *Requiem*, 216, 219
 Blatchford, Robert, 221
 Bliss, Arthur, *Morning Heroes*, 206
 Botticelli's *Lamentations*, 141
 Boulton-Lawson, *Songs of the North*, 52
 Brahms, 143, 170, 172, 176, 214, 217-8
 Broadwood, Lucy, *English County Songs*, x, 36, 68
 Browning, Robert, on harmony, 118
 Buck, Percy, on musical history, 97
 Buckle, Henry Thomas, on religion, 240
 Budyonny, *Budyonny's Cavalry Song*, 210
 Burns, 52, 61, 62, 65, 66
 Butler, Samuel, 105, 220
 Butterworth, George, 64, 238
 Byrd, 134-6, 147-9, 181-4, 195, 207, 212, 231
- Canudo, Ricciotto, on music as religion, 242
 Castagno's *Last Supper*, 109
 Chambers, Edmund, 42, 106
 Chappell, William, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 42, 78, 197-8
 Charlemagne, 87, 89
 Chopin's *Poland's Dirge*, 203
 Clark, Alice, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, 77, 78
 Constantine the Great, 89
 Coverdale, Miles, on popular music, 79
 Cromwell, Oliver, 79
 Curtis, Natalie, *The Indians' Book*, 4 *et seq.*
- Darwin, 2, 241
 Dawson, Christopher, *The Making of Europe*, 87
 Davidenko's *The Blacksmith*, 174-5
 Debussy, 162
 Delius, *Mass of Life*, 129
 Despard, Mrs, 153
 Dowland, 147, 181-4, 195, 207, 212
 Ducoudray, on Breton folk-songs, 234-5
 Durer, 117, 134, 135
 Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, 142
- Einstein, Oxford Lecture, 226, 227-8
 Elgar, 129, 172, 179-80, 196, 203-6, 207, 214
- Fellowes, Dr Edmund, 147
 Ferguson, Samuel, *Deirdre's Song*, 63, 71
 Fletcher Stuart on Elgar, 205

- Franck, Cesar, 172
 Fraser, J. G., 37, 99, 102, 112
 Freud, 9
 Gerald of Wales, on popular polyphony, 92, 93
 Ghirlandajo's *Last Supper*, 109
 Giotto's *Last Supper*, 108
 Glinka, 160
 Gluck's love-music, 184-5, 188
 Glyn, Margaret, *Evolution of Musical Form*, 94
 Graun's *Passion*, 213
 Graves, Alfred, words for Irish folk-tunes, 67
 Greig, Dr John, *Scottish Minstrelsy*, 65
 Gregory I, 89, 95, 96, 104, 105
 Hambly, W. D., *Tribal Dancing and Social Development*, 3, 8, 15, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
 Hammond, H. E. D., *Folk Songs from Dorset*, 49, 64, 71
 Handel, 177, 178, 184-5, 188, 202, 213
 Harrison, Jane, *Prolegomena to Study of Greek Religion*, 86
 Haydn, 100, 119, 125, 128, 149, 169, 170, 213, 242
 Henley, W. E., *The Last Post*, 194, 195
 Hildebrand, 89
 Hindemith, 161, 174
 Honegger, 173
 Horn, Trader, ix, 16, 23, 32
 Hughes, Herbert, *Irish Country Songs*, 63
 Hurry, Dr, on *Sumer is icumen in*, 94
 Hyde, Douglas, *Early Gaelic Literature*, 63
 Jarrett, Fr. Bede, on the Madonna and Child in art, 136-8
 Jeans, James, on cosmic doom, 129
 Jeppesen, Karl, *Palestrina and the Dissonance*, 111
 Jesus, 88, 100, 101, 105, 108, 109, 181
 Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, 50
 Justinian, 87
 Keats, on soul-making, 220
 Kendon, Frank, *Mural Paintings in English Churches*, 215
 Kennedy-Fraser, Mrs, *Songs of the Hebrides*, 35, 36, 46, 56, 59, 67, 75, 84
 Kodaly, *Psalmus Hungaricus*, 206
 Kropotkin, 168
 Lawrence, D. H., 3-4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 20, 23, 24, 31, 132, 232, 242-3
 Lazareva, *Russian Lullaby*, 143-4
 Lenin, ix, 154
 Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, 109
 Liszt's influence on Russian composers, 161
 Loewe, *Napoleonic Songs*, 203
 Lucretius, on religion, 240
 Mackay, Charles, on Scottish folk-songs, 73
 Macleod, Kenneth, 40, 47, 55, 58, 75-6
 Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 143
 Maitland, J. A. Fuller, *English County Songs*, x, 36
 Malko, 174
 Marx, Karl, 154
 Mary, the mother of Jesus, 132 *et seq.*
 Mendelssohn influenced Wagner, 169
 Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*, 215
 Miles, Napier, *Battle Songs*, 206
 Milman, *History of Christianity*, 102, 103
 Milton and religion, 134
 Moeran, E. J., *Suffolk Folk-Songs*, 64
 Molière's attitude to sex, 192
 Moore's *Irish Melodies*, 67
 More, Sir Thomas, and the value of gold, 158
 Morley, Thomas, on descant, 92
 Mossolov, 173-4
 Mozart, 100, 119-20, 127, 128, 142, 169, 170, 176, 185-6, 187, 188, 192, 216
 Murray, Gilbert, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, 27

- Nairne, Lady, 45, 66
 Napoleon, in music, 125, 203
 Newmarch, Mrs Rosa, *Russian Opera*, 160
- Ossian, 66, 74
- Palestrina, 100, 105, 110 *et seq.*, 117, 118, 125, 139-41, 165, 211, 231
 Parratt, Walter, as example of subconscious musical activity, 234
 Parry, Hubert, *The Art of Music*, 2, 29
 Pergolesi, 141, 165
 Perugino's *Pieta*, 141
 Petrie, Flinders, *The Revolutions of Civilization*, 87, 179
 Petrie, George, Collection of Ancient Irish Music, 45
 Pizetti, Ildebrando, 206, 216-17
 Powys, Llewelyn, on religion, 27
 Prior, E. S., on English Medieval Sculpture, 87, 215
 Prokofiev, 161, 192
 Purcell, Henry, 177-8, 183, 188
- Ravel, *Noel des Jouets*, 143
 Rembrandt, *Holy Family with Angels*, 137-8
 Respighi, Ottorino, *Belfagor*, 192
 Rickert, Edith, *Ancient English Christmas Carols*, 133
 Rimsky-Korsakov, 161, 169
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 31
 Rosselli's *Last Supper*, 109
 Rossini, 128, 141, 212
 Ruskin, 87, 158, 218, 223
 Russell, Bertrand, viii-ix, 226
- Sabaneyev, on Stravinsky, 167, 168-9
 Schoenberg, 161-2
 Schubert, 129, 143, 186, 191
 Schumann, 143, 169, 170, 203
 Schutz, *Magnificat*, 139, 142
 Scott, Walter, words for Scottish folk-tunes, 66
 Scriabine, 162
- Seabrook, W. B., *The Magic Island*, 10, 20, 28, 29
 Sharp, Cecil, on English Folk-music, 4, 35, 38, 49, 70, 79-80, 83, 97, 232, 234
 Shaw, G. Bernard, 105, 150-2, 156, 157-8, 192, 221
 Shaw, Martin, 238
 Shelley and religion, 134
 Sibelius, *Song of Tyrtæus*, 203
 Sidney, Sir Philip, on the border ballads, 65
 Smyth, Ethel, *Mass in D*, 129
 Snowden, Lord, 152
 Spence, Lewis, *Mexican Myths*, 99
 Spohr's *Last Judgement*, 217, 219
 Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien*, 203
 Strangways, Fox, on folk music, 10, 33
 Strauss's *Salomé*, 192
 Stravinsky, 129, 159 *et seq.*, 179-80, 192, 229, 232, 238, 240, 242
 Sullivan, J. M. W., *Mathematics and Music*, 227
 Synge's *Deirdre*, 20
- Tannahill's *Sleepy Maggie*, 61
 Titian and the Holy Family, 134, 135
 Tolstoy, 101, 159, 168
 Tchaikovsky, a romantic, 160
 Tye, Ernest Walker on the music of, 110
- Vaughan-Williams, 49, 64, 129, 219-220, 238
 Verdi's *Requiem*, 216
 Villemarqué, on Breton folk-song, 68
- Wagner, Richard, x, 3, 20, 100, 104, 113, 129-32, 143, 149, 150 *et seq.*, 169, 171, 172, 175, 178-9, 186, 189-92, 203, 214, 218-19, 226, 230, 232, 236-7, 240, 243
 Wagner, Cosima, 190
 Wagner, Minna, 189-90
 Walker, Ernest, on Tudor music, 110

- Walton, William, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 225
- Webb, Sidney, and Beatrice, on war and capitalism, 193-4
- Weber, influenced Wagner, 169
- Weelkes, 147-9, 181-3, 188, 212
- Wesendonck, Madame, 190
- Whitman, Walt, 8, 219-20, 222
- Whittaker, Dr, *North Country Ballads, Songs, and Pipe-tunes*, 36, 39, 43, 52, 60, 64, 72, 84-5
- Williams, W. S. Gwynn, *Welsh Folk-songs*, 55
- Wolf, Hugo, love-songs, 191
- Wood, Dr Charles, *Irish Folk-songs*, 67
- Wooldridge, Professor, on medieval music, 95, 97
- Zangwill, Israel, on music as religion, 242

